

NO SMOKING IN THE TRIANGLE

- Second Edition -

The Story of Mechanic Arts High School and
Boston Technical High School from 1893 to 1960



Thomas L. Hayden, Class of 1957

NO SMOKING IN THE TRIANGLE
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Preface to the Second Edition

I never intended to write a second edition of *No Smoking In The Triangle*. As far as I know, there are no big errors or deficiencies in the first edition. But after I finished it, I kept finding more interesting stories. Some were about the school itself, but most were stories about its people - stories of their lives inside and outside of the school. After uncovering a number of these stories, I realized that they would give a more personal feel to the history and deserved to be told. Thus, the second edition was born.

To provide a better feel for the Mechanic Arts/Boston Tech student experience, I have included many more pictures and illustrations in this edition.

For ease of reading, I have placed most alumni stories in sections titled Alumni Notes at the end of most chapters. Readers not interested in this aspect of the history can easily skip these notes.

I have tried to strike a balance among various topics. Although I wanted to give fair treatment to all periods of the school's history, I was limited at times by the information that was available. And though I would have liked to include even more stories of a personal nature, I also wanted to keep the history reasonably short. In the end, I had to make many compromises in the creation of this version.

To obtain material for this new edition, I returned to most of the same sources that I used last time – online newspaper, book and document archives; the Internet Archive; and copies of the student-written school magazine, *The Artisan*, in the City of Boston Archives. My experience shows that online locations, in particular, remain rich sources, since new information continues to be uploaded to them. I have also mined a few good stories about the school's alumni from various books. In this edition, however, I have also made more frequent use of information I gathered from people with a direct or indirect connection to Mechanic Arts High School (MAHS) and Boston Technical High School.

My hope is that you will enjoy reading the second edition of *No Smoking In The Triangle* as much as I did writing it.

As I did with the first edition, I dedicate this version of the story of a proud institution to today's students of Boston's John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science as they carry on the Mechanic Arts and Boston Technical traditions of perseverance, excellence, and accomplishment.

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Preface to the First Edition

A side benefit of helping to plan the Boston Technical High School Class of 1957's very successful 50th anniversary reunion was my becoming interested in the history of the school, known originally as Mechanic Arts High School. Previously, I knew nothing of its background aside from the most basic facts – the original building opened in 1893 and was torn down in the early 1960s. But some interesting stories told by a classmate motivated me to search for more information and to write down what I found.

I found a great deal on the World Wide Web, primarily in the collections of the *Boston Globe*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *New York Times*, and the *Internet Archive*. Also very useful were books, magazines, and educational publications made available online by the Boston Public Library, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other institutions.

But my single most valuable source was The City of Boston Archives in West Roxbury. The school staff accumulated historical information for many years and eventually turned it over to the archives for safekeeping, a very wise move. This information included Boston school department reports, personal correspondence and memoranda from headmasters, school yearbooks, many (unfortunately, deteriorating) scrapbooks of newspaper clippings probably assembled by school secretaries, photographs of the school and its students, and many bound copies of the student written magazine, *The Artisan*.

Setting down this part of the school's story has given me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction, but the job is not yet finished. The information I've already uncovered has raised more questions. Many of the files in Boston's archives still need to be read, digested, and documented. Plus, the story needs to be brought up to the present - how the school changed after its 1960 move from the Back Bay to Roxbury, after it became a coeducational school, and after it was renamed the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science in 1992. However, I will leave those updates to people who were connected to the school during those years.

I've written this story primarily to be one I would enjoy reading. My aim has been to make it not dry or scholarly, yet with enough detail to answer the Five Ws (and one H) of journalism – Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why? and How? I hope I've succeeded. I also hope its readers will enjoy the story. If they don't, however, I hope they will at least learn a few new things about the school.

My gratitude goes to the people who made this story possible. They include the teachers, staff, and administrators who built, taught in, operated, and maintained the school; the students who contributed to and benefited from it; the people who cared enough to save a record for the future; Karl Bossi '56, for his editorial help; and my '57 classmate Nick Reveliotto, who initially infected me with the school history bug. I also want to thank the good folks at the City of Boston Archives, who have been most helpful in making school information available to me. Thank you all.

I dedicate this story of a proud institution to today's students of the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science as they carry on the Mechanic Arts and Boston Technical traditions of perseverance, excellence, and accomplishment.

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Introduction

Technician, world famous artist, heroic World War II prisoner of war, professional football player, industrialist, engineer, small business owner, aviation pioneer, physician, Tuskegee airman, steamboat captain, police commissioner, author, military member, firefighter, plumbing inspector, lawyer, composer, psychologist, surveyor, art museum director, high school teacher, architect, Olympic figure skater, priest, watchmaker, admiral, investment banker, historian, large company executive, police detective, submarine commander, university president, chef, professional singer, US ambassador, college professor, politician, photographer and prominent architectural historian.

These are but a few of the accomplishments of young men who attended the school founded as Mechanic Arts High School and later known as Boston Technical High School. This is the story of that school – the building and its people – during its years at the corner of Belvidere and Dalton streets in the Back Bay section of Boston.

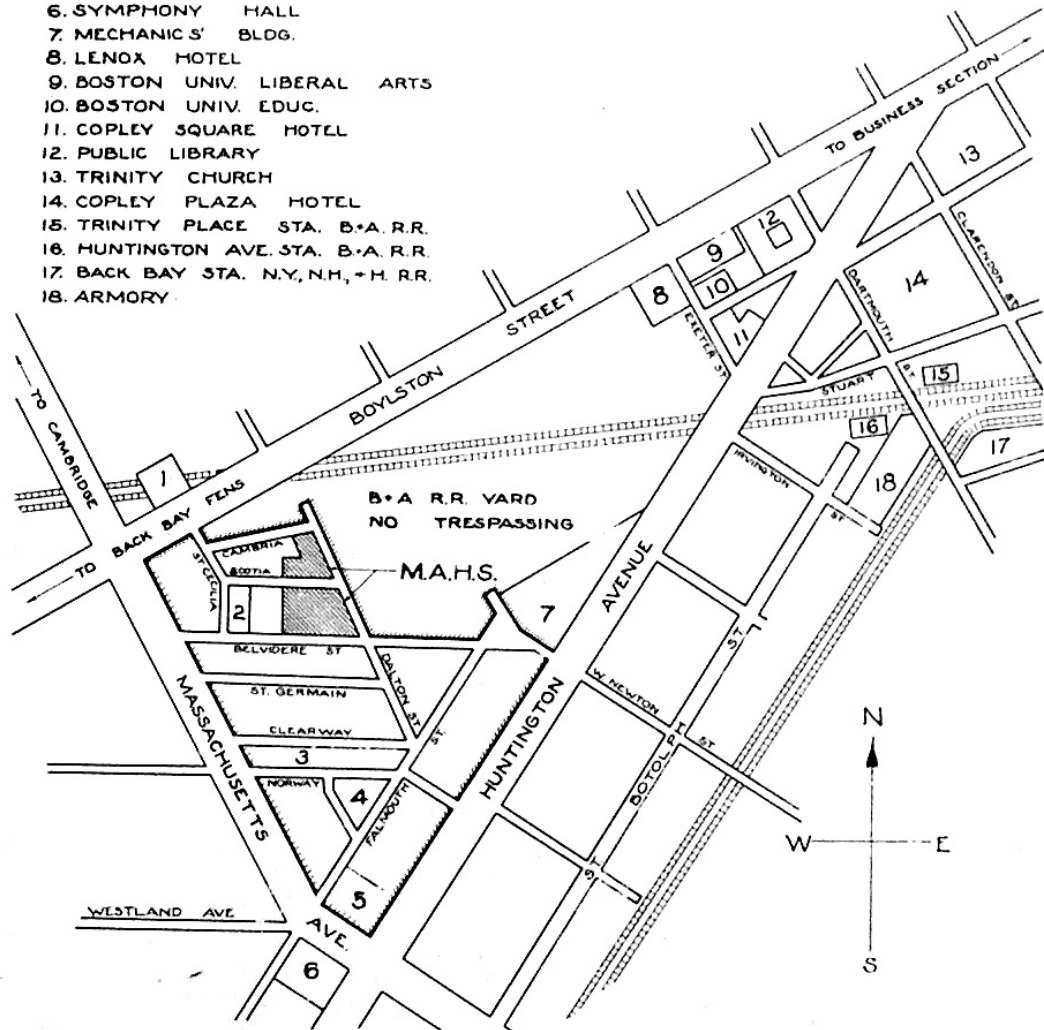
As built, the school was little more than bricks and mortar. Although it had many interesting architectural features, incorporated unique equipment and was surrounded by interesting stories of its founding and later existence, it was, basically, cold and lifeless. Bringing it to life required people - some of whom staffed it for, in some cases, many years; and some of whom spent a few years there as students, absorbing various amounts of knowledge from the staff. To present a more comprehensive picture of Mechanic Arts and Boston Technical, I've chosen to blend two narratives in generally chronological fashion. The first tells the story of the facility and its occupants throughout its lifetime; the second, found in chapter sections labeled Alumni Notes, describes what became of some of those students after they left the school.

In 2009, before I began to write this story, I used Google to search for the phrase “no smoking in the triangle”. Google found no references to it. As I’d suspected, it was meaningful only to the students of Mechanic Arts High School or Boston Technical High School during its years in the Back Bay. For those students, however, it was one of the first rules of the school they learned.

As the *Buff and Blue Key*, a student handbook, noted in 1929: The duty of the Student Council’s Outside Patrol, is “to prevent smoking and disorder on the part of students outside the school and within the ‘triangle’ bounded by the curbing of the inside sidewalk of Huntington Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and Boylston. The displaying of a cigarette or other smoking material within this area shall be considered the same as smoking.” The handbook also included the following map of the area, which clearly showed landmarks inside and outside of the “triangle” so there would be no misunderstanding on the part of students.

1. MASSACHUSETTS STA. B.E.R. CO.
2. ST. CECILIA'S CHURCH
3. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE PUB. CO.
4. FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST
5. HORTICULTURAL HALL
6. SYMPHONY HALL
7. MECHANICS' BLDG.
8. LENOX HOTEL
9. BOSTON UNIV. LIBERAL ARTS
10. BOSTON UNIV. EDUC.
11. COPLEY SQUARE HOTEL
12. PUBLIC LIBRARY
13. TRINITY CHURCH
14. COPLEY PLAZA HOTEL
15. TRINITY PLACE STA. B.A.R.R.
16. HUNTINGTON AVE. STA. B.A.R.R.
17. BACK BAY STA. N.Y., N.H., & H. R.R.
18. ARMORY

THE "TRIANGLE"
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE



Chapter 1 - How It All Began

In June 1893, grammar schools throughout Boston received a letter announcing the planned opening of a new school, Mechanic Arts High School (MAHS). The new high school was to offer a three year program whose graduates “will be well fitted either to continue their studies in some higher scientific or technical institution, like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or to take up some chosen mechanical trade, or to engage in general business.”

Clearly, this was intended to be a special school and not merely another general purpose academic institution built to accommodate an increasing city population. And just as clearly, much time and effort went into the project prior to its announcement. But where did the idea for such a school originate? Who was responsible for the planning that translated concept into reality? What obstacles were encountered? How was the school’s name chosen? To learn these answers, we need to look at the decades before 1893.

In the middle of the 19th century an educational movement advocating the introduction of manual training into schools took hold in Europe and the United States. Educators who supported this movement perceived a number of benefits from manual training. They felt it overcame a scheme of education in purely literary high schools believed to promote laziness in some students. They believed it replaced the practical training which had been given to children by their families back when most people lived on farms. They saw it as a way of providing students with systematic work designed to improve their intellectual powers. They felt it developed pupils’ creative abilities as well as their acquisitive powers. And they considered manual training to be an effective way of connecting with a large number of students who were just not engaged by the purely academic subjects or teaching methods of more traditional high schools.

Russia’s Imperial Technical School in Moscow became a pioneer in manual training instruction. It was the first school to successfully apply the laboratory method of instruction to the ‘mechanic arts’, a term used in the 19th century to describe engineering and other mechanical fields of expertise. After seeing a demonstration of that school’s methods at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, John Runkle, president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, formed a School of Mechanic Arts at MIT. His goal was to improve the education of civil and mechanical engineers by combining theory with practice. This successful initiative was later replicated at a number of United States colleges.

Over time, manual training following the Russian model was also introduced at the high school level across the USA. In Boston, the driving force behind the establishment of such a school was the city’s Superintendent of Public Schools, Dr. Edwin P. Seaver. In 1883, ten years prior to the opening of MAHS, Dr. Seaver recommended “that there be added to our public-school system one manual training school, thoroughly equipped for its work, occupying a place in the system side by side with the high schools, and open, under suitable conditions, to boys of fourteen years of age, and upwards.” This statement was made, Seaver said later, primarily to serve as a starting point for serious discussion and to attract public attention. Although Dr. Seaver’s suggestion was a novel one in 1883, by the time activities had progressed from mere discussion to actual planning for the school, other US cities had already established schools devoted to the study of the mechanic arts.

In 1889, Superintendent Seaver issued *A Plan for a Mechanic Arts High School in the City of Boston*, which specified the school's needs in great detail. For example:

- The requirements for admission to the three year program were to be “a grammar-school diploma or the equivalent examination, age not less than thirteen, and a good character.”
- His plan called for a 25-hour school week consisting of 10 hours of shop work (carpentry, wood turning, pattern making, molding, casting, forging, and machine shop); 10 hours of book work (English, mathematics, science or a foreign language); and 5 hours of drawing (primarily mechanical drawing, but also free-hand drawing). A 2-hour per week session of military drill was also considered for the program.
- It specified that the tools to be provided at each forge would include one anvil (84 pounds), four pairs of tongs, a poker, a rake, and a shovel.
- In the carpentry shop, some of the tools that were to be provided at each bench were a jack plane, a block plane, a 20” cross cut saw, a bit brace, a nail set, a bench brush, and a set (1/4”, 1/2”, 3/4”, 1”, 2”) of chisels.

Seaver's plan was based on an initial class size of 72 students and a maximum capacity of 216 students. Since the school would not need to accommodate three classes until its third year of existence, only one classroom, a drawing room, and a wood-working room would be required when the school opened. Another classroom was planned to be added in each of the next two years, along with the blacksmith shop, the machine shop and a second mechanical drawing room.

Even before MAHS was built, however, there was confusion regarding its primary mission. Dr. Seaver attempted to address the issue by stating emphatically that “It is not a *trade* school”, noting that the mechanic arts involve principles, while the trades are “merely details of application”. The school would develop general mechanical skill, he said, but “would not make its pupils finished artisans in any one trade”. Confusion over the goals of the new school would persist for decades, requiring its headmasters to repeat the same basic message many times over the years.

In his plan, Dr. Seaver strongly recommended that the name of the school be “The Mechanic Arts High School”. Although “Manual Training School” had come to be the name used almost exclusively for such schools throughout the country, Seaver believed the name he proposed to be much more truly descriptive of the aim of the school and the level at which it operated. He wrote, “It stands above grammar schools and side by side with the Latin high schools and the English high schools.” At the time, so-called Latin (or classical) schools generally prepared students for the learned professions, while English schools instructed their pupils for lives in the commercial world. In Dr. Seaver's opinion, a mechanic arts high school would prepare students whose future needs would be primarily an experimental knowledge of the leading mechanic arts.

Chapter 2 - The 1890s

At the beginning of the 1890s, work on Mechanic Arts High School forged ahead in accordance with Dr. Seaver's plans. The school committee requested, in February 1890, the city council to appropriate \$30,000 for "the establishing of a Mechanic Arts High School, said sum to be used for renting suitable quarters and fitting up the same, and the necessary instructors for the work required." In June 1891, the City of Boston purchased from Lewis Coleman a 21,950 sq. ft. lot for the school building at the corner of Belvidere and Dalton Streets in the Back Bay for \$40,388.

Edmund March Wheelwright, Boston's city architect, was commissioned to design the original MAHS building. One of the most important local architects of the period, Wheelwright's other projects include the Longfellow Bridge over the Charles River, Horticultural Hall, the Forest Hills elevated railway station, Boston Fire Department headquarters (now the Pine Street Inn), and the Lampoon Building near Harvard Square in Cambridge. He considered the MAHS building to be significant enough, internally as well as externally, that he filled almost an entire chapter of his 1901 book *School Architecture* with plans, photographs, and descriptions of it.

Norcross Brothers Contractors and Builders of Worcester, prominent builder of many well known American structures - Symphony Hall, Trinity Church, and Copley Square's Public Library in Boston; New York's Pennsylvania Station; and the Rhode Island State Capitol, - constructed the initial MAHS building. Construction costs for the building itself were \$148,565. With furnishings adding another \$32,783, the total cost (including land) of the project rose to \$181,348, equivalent to more than \$5.4M in 2009 dollars.

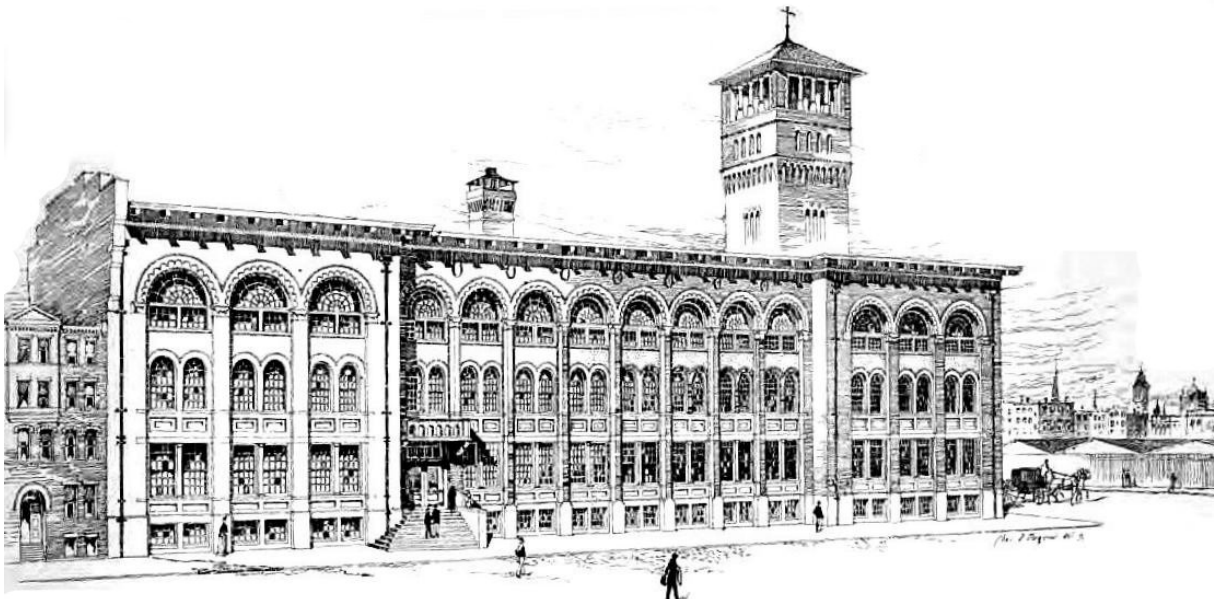


PLATE XVIII.—MECHANIC ARTS HIGH SCHOOL.

1892 drawing of the planned Mechanic Arts High School building

Prior to its opening, MAHS received a good deal of publicity. A March 1892 *Boston Globe* article gave the public a preliminary look at the new school. It called the building “most imposing in architectural beauty”, noting that the base was to be of granite, with upper stories consisting of alternating layers of red brick and sandstone. The article also stated that: “The whole will be lighted by electricity”, “The tower will be 112 feet high and 23 feet square”, and “The Third floor was to contain a drawing library and “a large, well appointed gymnasium”. As its students know, however, this last feature was never built.

In June 1893, at the same time that the opening of MAHS was announced to Boston’s grammar schools, well-known educator Dr. Frank A. Hill was selected to be its first headmaster. Dr. Hill, a graduate of Bowdoin College, had served as the principal of several high schools in Maine and Massachusetts. Frank Hill would lead MAHS for only one year, resigning in May 1894 to become the Secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education.

Mechanics Arts High School admitted its first students in September 1893. Salary records for that month show that its initial faculty consisted of the headmaster (at \$315 per month), two junior masters (at \$144 per month each) and two instructors (at \$140 per month each). In October, another instructor and one temporary instructor (\$4 per day) were added.

Many years later, people remembered that the school opened in an unfinished building filled with more than 100 workmen and the sounds of their saws and hammers. For the first three months, each school day was limited to three hours. Only one large room, divided into two classrooms, was available for school purposes. Dr. Hill later recalled that, “although the school opened on time, for some days it was necessary for students and teachers to climb to the third floor, the only floor in use, on ladders.” More classrooms and a woodworking shop became available later in the school year, but it was estimated that only four months of satisfactory instruction was provided during that entire period.

Because of the turmoil caused by construction within the building, the school acquired a bad reputation, causing applications for admission to plummet from 156 in 1893, to 67 in 1894 and 69 in 1895. However, once the entire facility was up and running during the 1895-96 school year, admissions rebounded to 155 in 1896 and reached 189 by 1899.

Although Dr. Edwin P. Seaver and Dr. Frank A. Hill made significant contributions to the school, no one is more closely identified with MAHS during its early years than Charles W. Parmenter, who succeeded Hill as headmaster in 1894 and remained in that position for 29 years, until his retirement in 1923.

In September 1894 the School Board’s Committee on Manual Training requested Headmaster Parmenter “to arrange the course of study so as to provide, if possible, for the fitting of the pupils for the Institute of Technology in three years.” and “to arrange for instruction in French immediately.” It also authorized Parmenter “to admit non-residents to the school under the rules of the School Board.” And lastly, it directed “That no smoking be allowed in the Mechanic Arts High School.” It is not known if this initial no smoking rule extended as far as that famous “triangle”.

MAHS graduated its first class, 55 students, in June 1896. Only one year later, the Superintendent of Schools wanted to know what had become of those graduates. The headmaster dutifully reported that 14 were enrolled at MIT, four were enrolled at other colleges, six were salesmen, 18 were engaged in various mechanical pursuits, one was a wood-working teacher, five were working in architect or engineer offices, and one was on the school ship *Enterprise* at the Massachusetts Nautical Training School (currently known as the Massachusetts Maritime Academy). The status of two graduates was unknown.

The remaining four members of that first class were listed as being in the “fourth year” – one at English High School and three at MAHS. At Mechanic Arts the fourth year was an optional extension for graduates of the three year program. Three year diplomas were later discontinued; four years of study became a requirement for graduation.

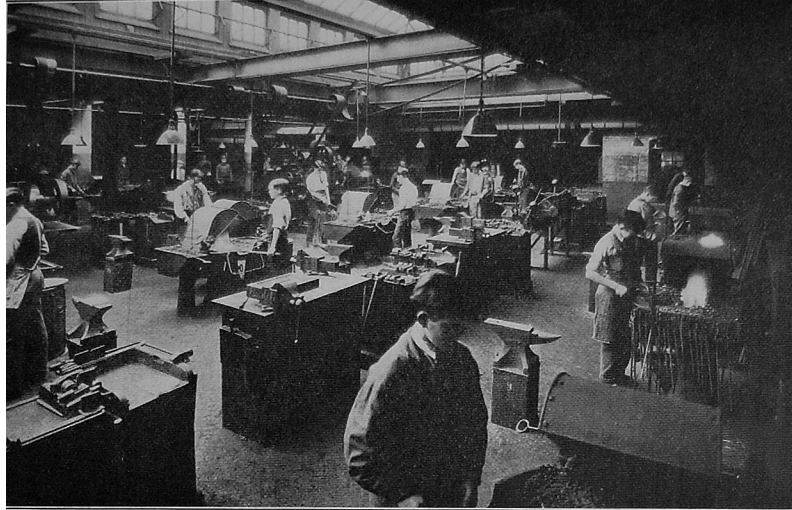


Drawing room at Mechanic Arts High School

School committee records show that a lack of funding caused the initial 1893 building to be built without some of the features specified in Dr. Seaver’s original plan. In fact, it wasn’t until the completion of an addition in 1899 that the building came substantially in line with those plans. This addition contained a library, the headmaster’s office, chemistry and physics labs, a classroom, a drawing room, a photographic dark room, and a toilet room for women teachers. In the basement were a totally new forge shop, a janitor’s room and a bicycle storage room. The

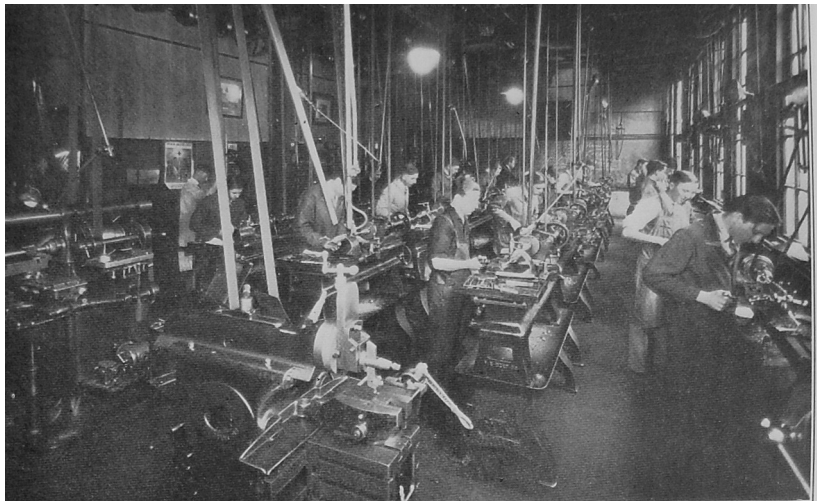
new addition cost \$57,258 and furnishings cost \$6,964. Despite this expenditure, however, there was still no sign of that promised “large, well appointed gymnasium”!

Prior to the 1893 MAHS opening, its forge shop was thought to be what today would be called “state of the art”. However, it was soon found to be “entirely unsatisfactory”. The new forge shop provided in the 1899 addition was called by the *Boston Globe* the “largest and best equipped of its kind in the United States”.



PART OF THE FORGE SHOP.

The shop was 91' long by 41' wide and featured 36 forges and anvils, plus associated equipment. It was also equipped with a raised area of 36 tablet chairs arranged around an instructor's forge and anvil for use in demonstration lessons. This configuration was most likely the same one in use until the building closed in 1960.



ONE OF THE MACHINE SHOPS.

In June 1896, Mrs. Emily A. Fifield, only the second woman ever to serve on the Boston School Committee, proposed a motion specifying that "the pupils of the Mechanic Arts High School be included in the disposition of the Franklin Medals." The school committee voted this

into effect. From this time, silver Franklin Medals, provided for by funds bequeathed to Boston in 1790 by Benjamin Franklin and bearing the legend "Gift of Franklin", would be awarded annually to the top ranked scholars of Mechanic Arts High School as well as to those of Boston Latin School and English High School.

A Watertown newspaper reported in April 1897 that Dr. Parmenter took the senior class of MAHS to the Watertown Arsenal. The headmaster had earned his PhD degree at Tufts in 1895.

In 1897, a number of girls applied for admission to MAHS, which brought the issue to the attention of the school committee. A report from the school stated that "It may be claimed that much of the work now done in this school is as valuable for girls as for boys. ... This opinion did not prevail, however, when the initial steps were taken which led to the establishment of the school, and the building has been erected and equipped with special reference to the needs of boys." Noting that even though much of the school work could be successfully accomplished by many girls, the report stated "only girls of remarkable physical strength and exceptional tastes and aptitudes would find pleasure or profit in the forge-shop or machine shop."

This report stressed the difficulty of providing suitable accommodations for girls, especially in light of the high likelihood that MAHS would not even be able to handle all the boys expected to apply for admission. It concluded, "From every point of view, therefore, it appears to be clearly impracticable, however desirable it may be, to admit girls to the Mechanic Arts High School at this time." The school committee agreed with the MAHS report, effectively shutting the door on the issue. It would be roughly another 100 years before the school would admit young women.

It was reported in later years that more than 100 boys of those admitted in 1893 were drawn from English High School, which caused anxiety among that school's teachers because of the possibility of job losses. But admissions to English returned to their normal levels within two years. And the total number of students enrolled in MAHS during the rest of the decade also rose steadily:

Sept 1895	160
Sept 1896	237
Sept 1897	330
Sept 1898	412
Sept 1899	456

N. C. Wyeth, later to become a world famous artist and one of America's favorite illustrators, was admitted as a special non-resident student in 1897. The Needham, MA native did not graduate from MAHS, however, but transferred to the Massachusetts Normal Arts School.

In a letter written 50 years after his graduation, Carl L. Mittell '97 provided the history of the MAHS school colors. He recalled that the Class of 1896 had decided the colors should be red and gray, the same as MIT's colors. But the Class of 1897, "with surprising foresight, did not 'cotton' to the idea of being labeled only as a prep school for M.I.T." and, thus, chose Buff and Blue. Buff, a pale yellow-brown color that gets its name from the color of buffed leather, and Blue were the colors of the American Continental Army's uniforms.

During the early years of MAHS' existence, it was only a short walk from Belvidere and Dalton Sts. to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology campus. MIT was located near Copley Square, just outside the "triangle". Ironically, until it moved to its current campus in Cambridge in 1916, MIT was commonly known as "Boston Tech".

In summary, although the 1890s began with high hopes for Mechanic Arts High School, the decade was filled with numerous obstacles and great frustration for the school. But perseverance overcame the problems that arose; the school opened and made significant progress. Much of the credit for these accomplishments must go to Dr. Parmenter, who devoted considerable extra time to school-related work. For example, beginning in 1895 he spent most of his summer vacations on projects such as making plans for equipment for the first wood-turning shop, supervising the installation of equipment in the first machine shop, planning for the 1899 addition, and overseeing the installation of equipment in new laboratories.

Chapter 3 - The 1900s

Almost unbelievably, the 1900s would present MAHS with many more challenges than the 1890s did. The key issues would still be its building and its mission.

Though the 1899 building addition solved the immediate need for more space, it soon became apparent that this was only a temporary solution to the school's overall needs. In September 1901, with 572 students enrolled and with predictions of 701 for 1902 and 869 for 1903, it became necessary to extend the school day to accommodate the extra students. While shop and lab facilities were adequate, there was a desperate shortage of space for academics. The school committee recommended that either a large addition to MAHS or a new building in the vicinity be built.

One person who provided immeasurable support to the school in this time of need was Mrs. Emily A. Fifield. As a school committee member serving on its Committee on Manual Training, she is said to have "adopted" Mechanic Arts High School. In February 1902 the Committee on Manual Training reported that:

- there were only permanent 563 desks available for students, far fewer than the expected number of students;
- class sizes in the shops and machine shops had been increased to 36 and 28, respectively, greater than the 24 recommended by Superintendent Seaver's original plan;
- in order to avoid refusing admission to some applicants, starting in September 1901 it had been necessary to increase the length of the academic session for first year students by one hour and by two hours for the mechanical departments;
- in the next school year it might be necessary to keep some shop classes running until 6 o'clock;
- The report concluded, "The equipment of the mechanical departments of a manual high school is necessarily expensive. In view of the sum which has already been invested in the existing plant it is far more economical to provide for the probable needs of the city for many years by an addition to the present building than any division of the school which can be suggested. The situation is now so critical that the imperative need of immediate action to secure additional accommodations cannot be too strongly emphasized."

Along with its report, the Committee on Manual Training issued an order that the schoolhouse commissioners be urged "to provide additional accommodations for the Mechanic Arts High School at the earliest possible date."

The last six months of 1902 proved to be a very busy period for city school bureaucrats. First, the Committee on Manual Training sent another shot across the bow of the schoolhouse

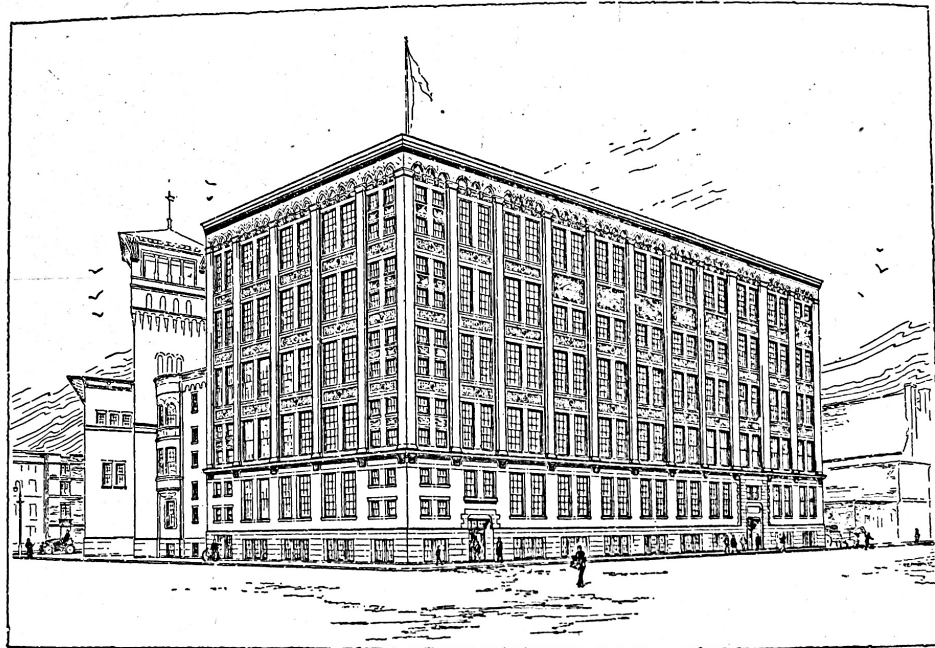
commissioners with a June 1902 order for them "to procure at once a suitable site for the future erection of a large building for the academic departments of this school." The commissioners recommended approval of this order by the Boston School Committee, which took place in September.

Next, in October, the MAHS headmaster and the Superintendent of Schools sent a letter to the Committee on Schoolhouses laying out the need for a large extension to the school, listing the features it should contain, and urging immediate action on construction of the addition.

But the schoolhouse committee unexpectedly sent the following order: "That the school committee establish a Mechanic Arts High School in the Roxbury District, instead of increasing the present Mechanic Arts High School." Records don't indicate why the Committee on Schoolhouses changed direction so radically.

The Committee on Manual Training fought back, answering, "Attention has since been drawn to a site that was thought to be desirable for a second school, but an investigation of that site has convinced your committee that it is not adapted to the purposes for which it was proposed. Moreover, we understand that no part of the funds now available can be expended for another Mechanic Arts High School. We are of the opinion, therefore, that the best interests of the city demand the immediate erection, near the present site, of a building adapted to accommodate the academic department of the Mechanic High School."

Finally, in December 1902 the Committee on Schoolhouses recommended that MAHS be enlarged, a recommendation which was adopted by the School Committee.

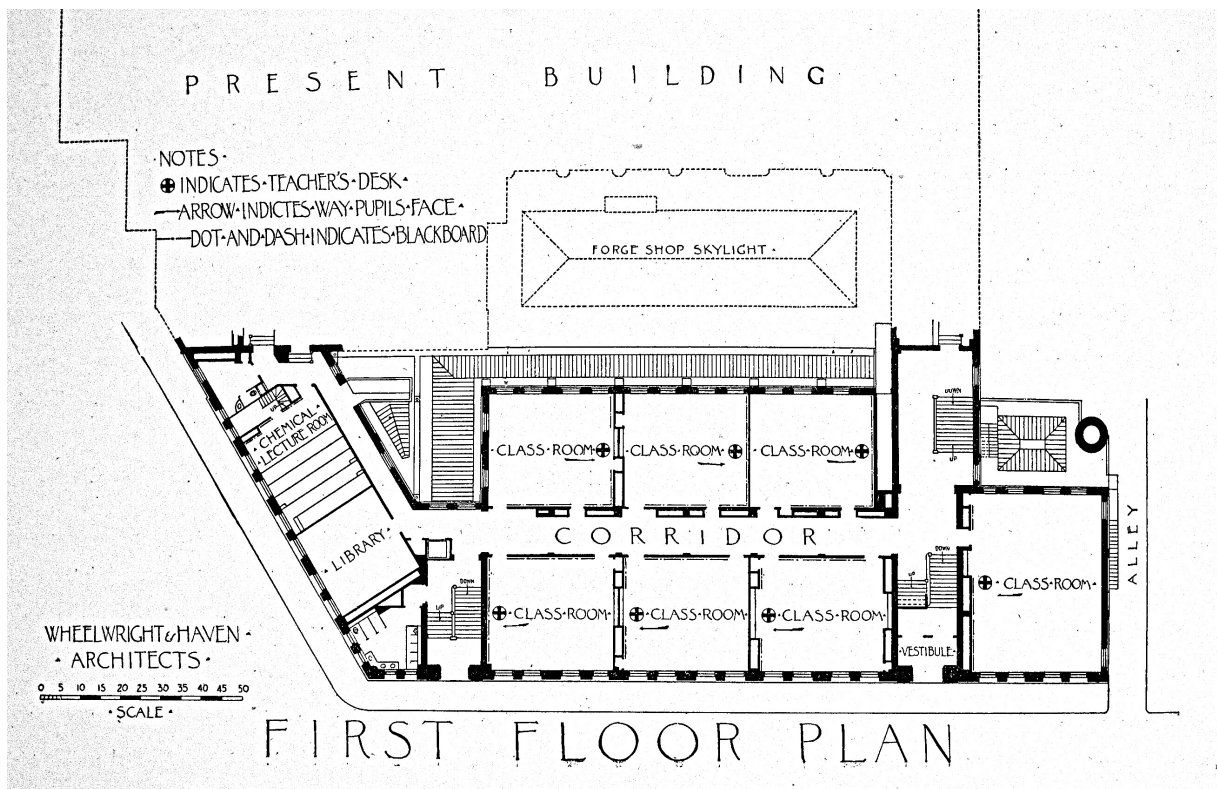


EXTENSION
MECHANIC ARTS HIGH SCHOOL
SCOTIA AND DALTON STREETS

Even before the project's December approval, the original building's architect, Edmund March Wheelwright, now of Wheelwright and Haven, was selected in November 1902 to design the addition. From then until July 1903, various local sites were studied and 11 preliminary sketches were submitted to the city. In July the Schoolhouse Commission approved the selected site and sketch, which set in motion the formal design phase of the project.

The site selected for the MAHS extension was on Scotia St., adjacent to the existing school. It was made up of 8 parcels of land - a vacant lot on the corner of Dalton and Scotia Streets plus seven other parcels along Scotia St. occupied by brick buildings. In August 1903, the city moved to take this 14,419 square foot site, assessed at \$75,500, by eminent domain.

By July 1904, drawings and specifications were essentially complete. The new building would provide 22 classrooms for 40 pupils each, four classrooms for 80 students, and an assembly hall seating 1100. The headmaster expected work to resume at this time, but he was to be disappointed once again. As he later explained to a friend, this delay was to permit work to advance on a high school in Charlestown. The MAHS expansion was put on hold until the spring of 1905.



In May 1905, the architects were told to restart work on the drawings and specifications; some rework was required because of building code changes concerned with fireproofing. But even though revised drawings were submitted to the city in July 1905, construction could still not begin! The proposed building, planned to be 100' high, was suddenly found to exceed an 80' height limit that had been established after the original drawings were prepared.

Finally, in November 1905 the building was granted an exemption from the new height restriction. "So long as the property owned by the city of Boston on Dalton, Belvidere and Scotia streets, bounded 205.5 feet on Dalton street, 250 feet on Belvidere street, and 184 feet on Scotia street, be said measurements more or less, shall be used for a Mechanic Arts High School, any building or buildings thereon may be erected to a height of one hundred (100) feet."

However, work still did not begin; the election of a new mayor caused the outgoing administration to essentially ignore the project. Yet there was reason to be optimistic. After discussing the school's expansion with the mayor-elect, Superintendent of Schools Dr. George H. Conley, assured Dr. Parmenter that work would commence shortly after the new mayor took office.

Unfortunately, Dr. Conley was not able to continue his support for the school, as he died unexpectedly shortly thereafter. As an assistant superintendent, Dr. Conley had supervised MAHS for ten years before his selection as superintendent; the headmaster considered Dr. Conley to be his closest professional friend. In a personal letter, Dr. Parmenter called the death "a calamity to the schools, and a personal loss to me that is difficult to overstate." He also noted that he would now be required to spend considerable time educating the "new men" about issues that Dr. Conley "understood perfectly."

Boston's new mayor was John F. "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, grandfather of U.S. President John F. Kennedy. The headmaster would later tell a friend that the mayor caused him "much anxiety and annoyance" over the next two years.

After nearly five years of discussions, votes, orders, recommendations, decisions, changes, designs, drawings, studies, delays, and redesigns, the bidding process for construction was finally opened in June 1906. Success at last? Hardly! In July, all the bids received were rejected for reasons of cost, and the allocated funding was used instead for the construction of other schools.

Dr. Parmenter continued his strong advocacy for the school extension as well as his plans to educate the "new men." Some of the arguments he used were:

- The school's regular session had always been 45 minutes longer than any other high school
- Starting in 1905 an extra hour had been added to the schedule of 403 students; 156 were required to stay for an extra two hours, to 4:20pm. This change prompted many bitter complaints from parents.
- It had been necessary to assign three students to each locker.
- The lack of an assembly hall was proving to be seriously detrimental to the operation of the school.
- It had become necessary to use the chemistry and physics labs in the 1899 addition as classrooms.

- Since 1901, it had been necessary to turn away some applicants for admission. This occurred in spite of lower than normal demand for spaces caused by public knowledge of the extra long school day and the unsatisfactory conditions in the building.
- The proposed per pupil cost of the MAHS extension was far less than the cost of high schools in Dorchester, East Boston, South Boston, and Charlestown.
- The projected savings from a proposed elimination of the third story of the extension would be minimal. The third story would cost \$175 per pupil, while the cost of Charlestown High was \$545 per pupil.
- Although the excellent work done at MAHS had positively influenced the course of study in similar schools in other cities, it had not been able to grow to meet its own needs since 1901.

In June 1907, almost one year after bids were rejected, the school committee appropriated \$500,000 for the new building project. Using essentially the same plans and specifications completed in July 1905, bids for construction were obtained and a contract was signed in early August 1907. Work began the very next day! Apparently following a forge shop maxim, the headmaster decided to “Strike while the iron is hot!”

But the mayor had other plans. The Fitzgerald administration had quickly developed a reputation for corruption and graft. As a result, the state appointed a Finance Commission in 1907 to look into the city’s finances and management. This commission quickly unearthed some very serious abuses. In what seems to have been an attempt to divert the attention of that commission, “Honey Fitz” asked it to advise him on the wisdom of the expenditure for the MAHS expansion.

And, after earlier assuring the school committee that he would approve the building contract, Fitzgerald refused to approve it – only three weeks after it had been signed!. The mayor told local newspapers that the reason for his actions was that the project was using non-union, non-American labor.

Fitzgerald’s refusal to approve the contract had immediate and serious consequences. Because the school had been built on land created as part of the 19th century reclamation of Boston’s Back Bay, over the years the basement floors had settled badly. Part of the MAHS extension project called for substantial reconstruction of the basement floors in the original building, as well as a rework of its heating and plumbing systems. In the three weeks before the mayor stopped the project, contractors had already torn up the floors, removed toilets, and disabled the heating and ventilation equipment!

Headmaster Parmenter was called back from summer vacation to cope with this latest crisis. It was necessary for him to cut through considerable red tape in order to restart this essential work and minimize any impact on classes, which began in September 1907. But once more the school was forced to operate with a large crew of workmen on site and to adopt a shortened school day.

“Honey Fitz” was nothing if not persistent; he had one last card to play. In November, he appointed a select committee consisting of the presidents of Harvard and Boston College and a former president of MIT to provide guidance to the Finance Commission on the advisability of enlarging MAHS. In an appearance before this committee, the mayor vigorously protested against the proposed expenditure of some \$500,000 until better provisions had been made for the city’s elementary schools. He also stated his belief that Mechanic Arts was taking care only of the grammar schools’ better students and felt that if district high schools were equipped to teach the same subjects as MAHS, students would eagerly go to those schools. A newspaper reported at the time that Superintendent of School Stratton D. Brooks shared the mayor’s beliefs.

The mayor’s hand-picked committee, however, turned out to be no mere rubber stamp. They conducted a thorough investigation of MAHS’ needs and spent considerable time going from room to room in the school. Some of the surprising things they learned firsthand were: some students had to return to the building after normal school hours to be able to use the machine shops; 50 boys were using a lumber storage room as a classroom; two boys were sometimes assigned to one desk; and a chemistry lab was being used as a classroom.

The committee handed Fitzgerald a severe setback, deciding in only six weeks that “this need is more urgent than that of any other specific addition to the school system of Boston” and strongly urging that work on the project proceed without delay. Game, set, match – Mechanic Arts!

To make this victory even sweeter for Dr. Parmenter, Mayor Fitzgerald was defeated for election that same month by a large margin.

Construction resumed again - for the last time - and the addition was finally occupied early in January 1909. During those last 12 months of the project, 300 first year students were housed in an annex set up in the Rice School, on Dartmouth St. This would not be the last time an annex would be needed for the school’s freshmen.

But, the problems which had plagued the school were not over yet. In the summer of 1908, during the midst of construction, the school committee commissioned Prof. Arthur L. Williston of New York’s Pratt Institute to study MAHS. Williston, a former principal of Boston’s Wentworth Institute, reported back in November 1908 with twelve recommendations, the most significant of which were:

- The school should abandon all college preparatory work.
- The school's name should be changed to “Mechanic Arts School of Boston”.
- The school should drop all foreign languages and give pupils a more perfect command of English.
- The curriculum should be altered to reduce the time devoted to pure mathematics and science; make the instruction more practical.
- All shops and school labs should be furnished with equipment of the same type that would be found in industrial establishments.

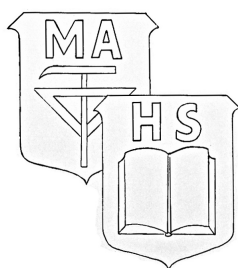
Headmaster Parmenter, not surprisingly, disagreed with much of Williston's report. It appears that he also interpreted some of the recommendations as implicit criticisms of his leadership. Though he concurred with increasing the emphasis on the mechanical departments and with making the academic work more practical, Parmenter felt that the other recommendations would make "the institution cease immediately to be a high school," one of its founding principles. He proposed, as an alternative, a revised course of study which offered students a choice of a more industrial curriculum starting in the third year.

However, the school committee did not support Parmenter's proposal and, in September 1909, it ordered that pupils entering MAHS be notified that the school's course of study would be modified to "prepare its pupils for industrial efficiency and not for entrance to college or higher technical institutions." The headmaster was apparently blindsided by this proclamation, which was delivered personally to him by the Superintendent of Schools on the first day of the 1909 school year. Dr. Parmenter later wrote that he spent much of the rest of the school year trying to provide information on the proposed changes, reply to questions for which he had no answers, defend himself for decisions he hadn't made and for which he wasn't responsible, while at the same time trying not to seem discourteous to his superiors - who had made the decisions and who were responsible.

In later years, Headmaster Parmenter wrote a summary of the development of MAHS and included brief descriptions of his work-related summer activities. As he had done in the 1890s, he spent the greater part of every summer vacation in the 1900s working on school-related projects – from "bringing the need of the Extension to the attention of officials", in 1901; to work related to preliminary drawings, in 1903; to studying iron and mining industries in Ohio and Michigan, in 1906; and working on the Extension and handling Prof. Williston's inquiries in 1908.

Somehow, though, Mechanic Arts still managed to conduct its business of teaching and learning during this tumultuous decade.

Following are some brief glimpses into life at the school during this time:



Mechanic Arts High School emblem

- In 1900, the above design was accepted as the official Mechanic Arts High School emblem. The two layered shields represented a combination of academic work (the book) with mechanical work (the linked triangle and hammer). When the emblem was used on class pins, class numerals. e.g., 08, would be added to the book's pages.

- In 1900, the Committee on Manual Training reconfirmed five previous votes limiting the headmaster's purchasing authority for incidental supplies to \$2 per item and \$50 per year. He was also required to provide a voucher for any item costing more than \$1.
- The 1901, school committee annual report listed two women teachers at MAHS; by 1904 there were four. All taught languages.
- In September 1904, it was ordered that wire netting be placed on the exterior of the MAHS building "in order to prevent the annoyance caused by the nesting of pigeons on this building". There was no netting on the school during my years there, but there certainly were many pigeons, whose accumulated byproducts on the building's fire escapes would most likely have made them unusable.
- Also in September 1904, a Mechanic Arts Evening High School was established, with Dr. Parmenter as its headmaster.
- In October 1904, the school department turned down a request by MAHS for "one standard dictionary of the English Language".
- Mechanic Arts won a Gold Medal at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair for its portion of an exhibit by various Boston schools.
- In November 1905, newspapers reported the death of Mattapan MAHS student Winchester Putnam. Complaints by parents of other pupils who had come home sick from the school prompted an investigation into whether the cause was formaldehyde in the milk sold at Mechanic Arts. Unfortunately, records do not indicate the results of this investigation.
- In September 1906, a fourth year was added to the requirements to earn a diploma.
- In October 1906, the school committee reported that "The Chairman stated that he had received an application from pupils of the Mechanic Arts High School representing the basket ball team connected with that school for suitable accommodations in which to practise." In November the "Chairman was requested and authorized to make such arrangements as he may deem expedient to provide accommodations for basket ball practice for pupils of the Mechanic Arts High School."
- Regardless of the accommodations made in 1906, the basketball practice situation became an issue again in December 1908. As noted in the *Artisan*, a Mechanic Arts-Latin School game had been postponed because, "As our team had no place to practice, it was in no condition to meet the strong Latin quintet."
- An outside telephone connection was installed in 1906.
- The first edition of the school's magazine was published in March 1907, adopting as its name The *Artisan*, which had been suggested by S. B. Hubbard '06. At the time it was a monthly publication priced at 10 cents per copy or 75 cents for the school year.

- The *Artisan* staff seemed to be continually searching for students to write articles and contribute artwork, In Oct 1907, it even offered a \$5 prize for the best cover design. But, since that offer was continued for many months and the same cover design was used for a long time, it seems as if the prize may never have been awarded.
- That first *Artisan* contained an eerie story, "The Last War.", by Franklin Medal recipient Ralph A. Holbrook '06. Not even four years after the Wright Brother's epoch-making flight, and almost two years before the world's first military airplane, Holbrook wrote of a Japanese invasion of Hawaii 1927. In the story, Japan, whose attack had been provoked by the US annexation of Hawaii in 1897, had not followed up their attack by "an invasion of the United States without waiting for the declaration of war" because "Japan was far too wise to disgust the neutral governments by an unprovoked attack upon a friendly nation." Yes, Holbrook missed the mark, factually, in some respects - e.g., in a later battle in the story, Japanese planes were driven off by a "dull red streak" from a weapon which fired atoms of magnetized lead; and the brilliant scientist who developed the weapon was praised for having "saved your country and put an end forever to this curse of war!" - he was amazingly prescient in other respects. I wonder if Ralph Holbrook, who would later attend MIT, remembered his old *Artisan* story in December 1941?
- The total number of students enrolled at Mechanic Arts continued to rise:

Sept 1900	493	
Sept 1901	572	
Sept 1902	652	(the number of first year students was limited to 288)
Sept 1903	695	"
Sept 1904	730	"
Sept 1905	754	"
Sept 1906	752	"

One of those 572 students at MAHS in 1901 was a non-resident, Booker T. Washington Jr., son of famed African-American educator Booker T. Washington. Records do not show how Washington, known as the "Wizard of Tuskegee", and Dr. Parmenter had become acquainted, but the father did request the headmaster to admit his son to Mechanic Arts. The Boston School Board granted its permission based on the senior Washington's "noble service to the nation". Unfortunately, though, it was an unsettled time in Booker T. Jr's life and he did not remain at Mechanic Arts for long. Subsequently, he also had short stays at a number of private schools in Massachusetts and New Hampshire before finally settling down at Fisk University in Nashville, TN.

In 1908, Mechanic Arts' major rival in football was Dorchester High School (DHS). The *Artisan* covered that year's "big game" with a diagram of the game.

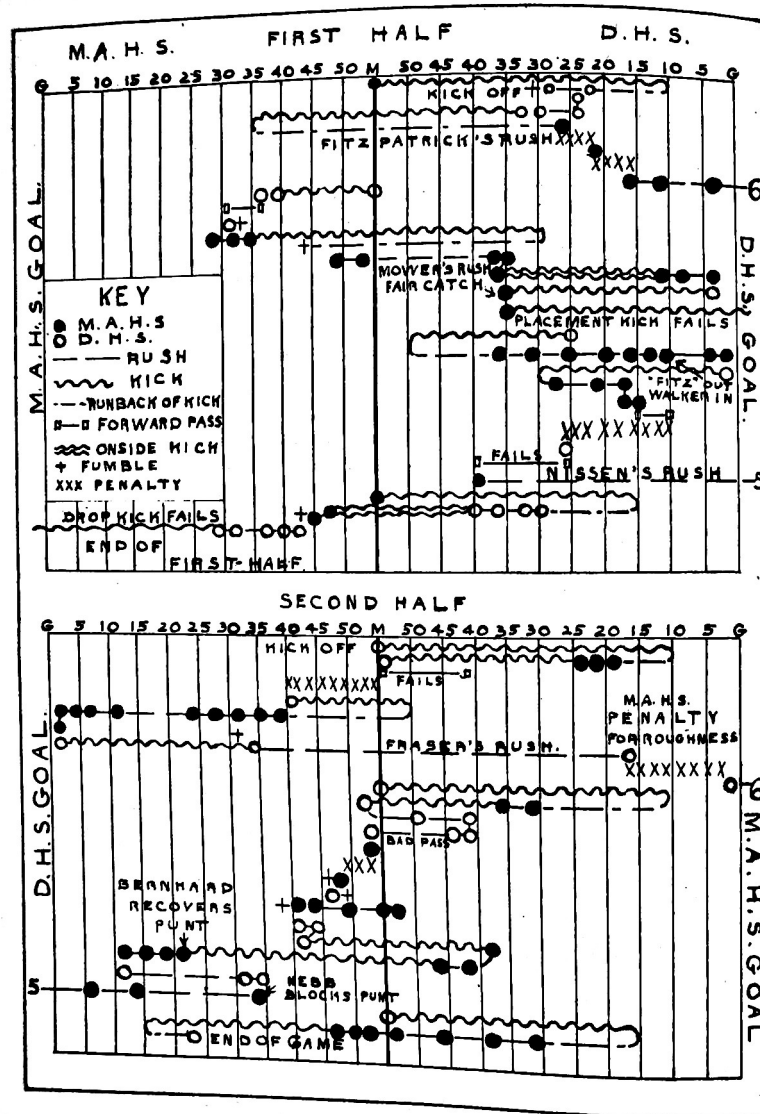


Diagram of 1908 Mechanic Arts vs. Dorchester High School football game

Miss Josephine M. Curry, an English and French teacher at Mechanic Arts, resigned in April 1909 because she became Mrs. John Hagerty. At the time, married women were not allowed to be teachers. It was not until 1953, in fact, that Massachusetts allowed women to continue teaching after marriage.

In May 1909, the senior class held a dance in the school's new hall. According to the *Artisan*, the headmaster was initially opposed to the idea, but eventually approved it. The dance lasted from 2-6 pm; ice cream and cake were served in the new lunchroom at intermission. Even Superintendent of Schools Stratton D. Brooks attended the event. In addition to dancing, students were allowed to show their dates around the old and new parts of the MAHS building. I bet all those girls dressed up in their party dresses were especially thrilled to see the Forge Shop!

Alumni Notes for the 1900s

Early on, the *Artisan* frequently published letters from MAHS alumni that praised the school and described how what they had learned as students there helped them later in life. Some were requested by the *Artisan* staff; these were often from alumni attending college and were written to make their colleges look attractive to MAHS students. In June 1908, alone, the *Artisan* contained letters from Harvard, Tufts, and "Tech" (MIT).

In December 1908, the *Artisan* listed 19 MAHS alumni attending Harvard University and reported that a Mechanic Arts High School Club had been formed there. Its purpose was "to give a cordial welcome to new students coming to Harvard from Mechanic Arts, to furnish information about Harvard, and to promote social intercourse among the Mechanic Arts men already in college."

One member of the Class of 1901 was **Ronan C. Grady**, of East Boston. Following his graduation from MAHS, Grady attended the U.S. Naval Academy, from which he graduated in 1906 as the president of his class. Following a then legally-required period of two years sea duty as a warranted Midshipman, he was commissioned an Ensign.

Sidney Fiske Kimball '04, born in Newton, MA, attended Harvard University's Lawrence Scientific School after graduating from MAHS. But, as a result of the Lawrence School's dissolution in 1906, his 1909 bachelor's degree in architecture was awarded by Harvard College.

George D. Murray '06, won appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy after leaving MAHS early to travel to Annapolis to prepare for the entrance examinations.

Under the somewhat gossipy headline "TECH STUDENT SECRETLY WED", the *Boston Globe* revealed in October 1908 that **Willard Frederick Rockwell** '05, of Dorchester, had secretly married his girlfriend on a one-day picnic to Providence RI in June. An MIT student, Rockwell told his father of his marriage only when he ran low on money. After their wedding, the new Mr. And Mrs. Rockwell had continued to live with their respective parents, who were reportedly very upset when they finally learned of the nuptials..

The Mechanic Arts High School Class of 1901 included **Samuel Seaver**, son of Dr. Edwin P. Seaver, the school superintendent whose foresight and determination had been the impetus behind the founding of the school.

Ernest G. Small ca.'05, born in Waltham, attended Dartmouth College before being appointed to the U.S. Naval Academy, from which he graduated in 1912.

Chapter 4 - The 1910s

Mechanic Arts High School's building worries may finally have been over, but a much more serious struggle - over its mission - was just beginning.

In 1911 the school committee appointed a Businessmen's Advisory Committee to investigate a report published by MIT showing that, from 1895 to 1906, students from MAHS didn't perform as well as those from suburban and other Boston high schools. Figures showed that an above average number of MAHS men left MIT with a poor record; a lower than average number graduated; and the academic record of those who did graduate from MIT was lower than average. The committee's attention was particularly drawn to the fact that English High School graduates rated higher than MAHS graduates in all three categories.

C.W. Parmenter replied that he felt MIT's unfavorable judgment of MAHS was unjustified. He argued that MIT's figures did not present the whole story. His rebuttal was based on three main points:

1. English High School was established 75 years before Mechanic Arts. It drew many promising sons from the families of its alumni and attracted large numbers of the most talented elementary school graduates to one of New England's best high school buildings. MAHS, on the other hand, did not have the same drawing power. But, in spite of a generally inadequate and overcrowded building, it managed to train and send to MIT more of its graduates than did English. Also, the average standing of MAHS graduates was merely five points lower than that of English High's graduates, with their heritage of distinguished achievement.
2. Many former MAHS students who left MIT did so not because of lack of ability, but because they needed to work and, therefore, could not devote sufficient time to their studies.
3. Because MIT would not provide the names of the 234 students it claimed were former MAHS students, the headmaster could not examine their high school records. However, he was not able to find more than 208 Mechanic Arts graduates who had attended MIT. The difference, he felt, may be students who had attended, but never graduated from, MAHS and later qualified for admission to MIT through the use of tutors or private schools.

Incidentally, one point made by Parmenter is most unusual. He states "Whatever may be the prevailing public opinion, it is nevertheless true that the primary purpose of the Mechanic Arts High School has always been to give the best training possible to boys whose formal education was to end with the high school, and preparation for technical colleges has been merely incidental." This is certainly contrary to his previous positions and also contrary to the stated position of the school committee.

The most critical look at Mechanic Arts High School, however, was yet to come. In early 1912, the Boston School Committee commissioned a study of the school by Charles A. Prosser, Secretary of the National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education. Through a series of

school visits, interviews with its staff, and questionnaires provided to students (of both MAHS and English High) and Headmaster Parmenter, Mr. Prosser collected a great amount of data for his study, the aim of which was to decide if the school was effectively doing the job the school committee desired.

Prosser's 134-page report, for which he was paid \$822.55 in May 1914 by the school committee, and which he later used as his PhD thesis, contains many conclusions in common with the reports of Prof. Williston and the Businessmen's Advisory Committee. Prosser found that:

- The school committee wanted MAHS to prepare its pupils for advantageous entry into industry, while the school's aim seemed to be to give its students a general education and prepare them for engineering college.
- The course of study, and kind of instruction provided, did not give the kind of training the school committee desired.
- The classes, especially shop classes, were too large.
- MAHS was not needed as a preparatory school for engineering college; other city high schools seemed to do the job better.
- The school failed to meet the needs of the 85% of its students who did not go on to an engineering college and concentrated on the mere 15% who did.
- The headmaster was not currently, and had not been for about 10 years, in agreement with the school committee as to "what the school should be and do".

C.A. Prosser's main recommendations were:

- The school committee and the headmaster should reach an understanding regarding the mission and organization of the school.
- If the headmaster could not agree fully with the aims of the school committee he should request to be transferred to another high school.
- MAHS should gradually abandon all attempts to prepare students for engineering college and concentrate on the school committee's goal of preparing students for industry.
- Courses such as foreign languages, general science and general math should be eliminated.
- The normal use of textbooks should be eliminated and replaced by trade literature and information from outside shops.
- All teachers, even English teachers, must have some industrial experience.

- Shops should be organized as commercial enterprises.
- Instruction should include visits to industrial plants and lectures by businessmen.
- Classes should be made smaller.
- A placement bureau should be established.
- Changes should be instituted beginning with the Class of 1918's entrance in 1914.

As might be expected, given his track record, Headmaster Parmenter rejected most of Prosser's study. He replied to the school committee that, although he believed some of Prosser's recommendations would be beneficial to the school, he disagreed with many of them. He felt that they would increase the cost per pupil by 40-50%; would reduce the capacity of MAHS to 1000 pupils; would require substantial expenditures for building and equipment changes; and would seriously disappoint school alumni.

Dr. Parmenter proposed an alternative plan:

- Change the name of the school to "Technical High School", because "Mechanic Arts High School" causes confusion regarding its goals and organization.
- Reorganize the course of study into two parallel paths – an Industrial track and a General, or Academic, track. Students would study essentially the same subjects for the first two years, regardless of which track they were on.
- Mathematics courses would be oriented more toward practical applications for all first and second year students and for all four years in the Industrial path.
- Reorganize shop work so as to introduce more standard shop methods but not require smaller classes.
- Organize a placement bureau.
- Make it clear that the primary aim of the school was to give practical training to "boys who are not going to college."

The school committee did not accept Parmenter's alternative proposal. They decided to adopt the so-called "Prosser Plan."

At the National Education Association's convention in the summer of 1914, Adelbert H. Morrison, head of Mechanic Arts' science department, presented a paper on applied science in a technical high school. Mr. Morrison referenced C.A. Prosser's report and stated his belief that the "experiment" starting at MAHS in September 1914 would be watched keenly by educators all across the country. He also included some interesting, and seemingly politically correct, statements such as:

- His paper assumes that it is “no part of the purpose of a technical high school to prepare pupils for a technical college”.
- It has been demonstrated that a nontechnical high school provides a better preparation for technical college, since a technical high school does not usually attract the type of minds capable of dealing with abstract problems.
- A technical high school should not aim to have its pupils attain manual skills in mechanical processes, since that’s the goal of a trade school.

The Boston School Superintendent’s *Annual Report for 1914* contains a fairly lengthy explanation of the reorganization of the MAHS course of study, including the rationale behind it. Interestingly, it also presents data showing that almost one in six (actually, 1277 out of 7283) Boston high schools boys was enrolled at Mechanic Arts.

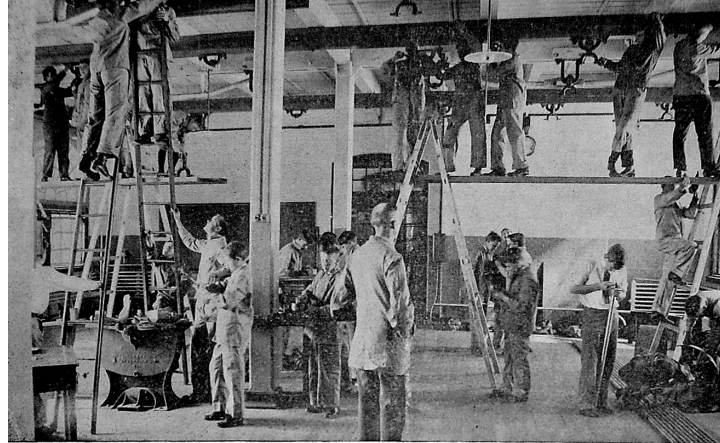
The so-called “experiment” appeared to progress smoothly from 1915-1917. Annual reports for those years’ reports say little more about MAHS than “The Mechanic Arts High School is being reconstructed into an industrial school to prepare for industrial occupations outside of the trades.”

But, apparently, things were not progressing as well as reported. Albert E. Winship, nationally known educator and editor of the *Journal of Education*, wrote a strongly worded *Boston Globe* article in March 1919. He began by charging that some among Boston’s elite had always given their own children the best education while at the same time discouraged the over-education of the masses. He also accused some people of trying to turn the city’s most popular high school, Mechanic Arts, into a “mere bench shop”, thereby robbing boys from ordinary families of the opportunity to better their lives. Winship concluded with the warning that degrading “our noble Mechanic Arts” would be, in effect, sending a message to prospective MAHS students they would have to abandon their aspirations and hopes if they entered the school.

Later in 1919, the school superintendent reported that, after a five year trial period of the “Prosser Plan”, it had been decided to make some changes in the school’s course of study. He clearly stated that Prosser’s plan was not being abandoned, but modifications were being made to introduce in the third and fourth year a “parallel course giving wider opportunities to the students of the school”. This path would provide for certain electives allowing students to prepare for higher technical institutions. This new plan sounded very similar to C.W. Parmenter’s alternative plan, which the school committee had rejected in 1914.

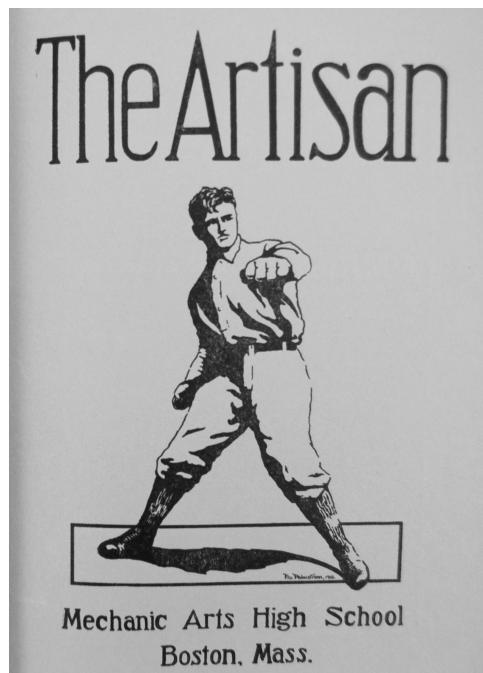
In June 1919, the school committee noted that the superintendent had received "a communication from the Alumni Association of the Mechanic Arts High School congratulating the Board on the adoption of the revised course of study for that school, and expressing the extreme satisfaction of the Association at the change in the course." Dr. Parmenter had been correct in 1914 when he predicted that adoption of the "Prosser Plan" would seriously disappoint alumni.

A much different view of the “Prosser Plan” trial was provided years later in a school history written for The *Artisan* by student S. B. Huss '29. He wrote, “The result was a dismal failure, so dismal that immediately when the four years allotted to the experiment were up, the course was again changed.” Since Huss had been only about 7 years old when the experiment was terminated, his view undoubtedly was formed by MAHS teachers and staff who had lived through the “Prosser Plan”.



OUR BOYS HANGING MACHINERY IN PATTERN MAKING SHOP

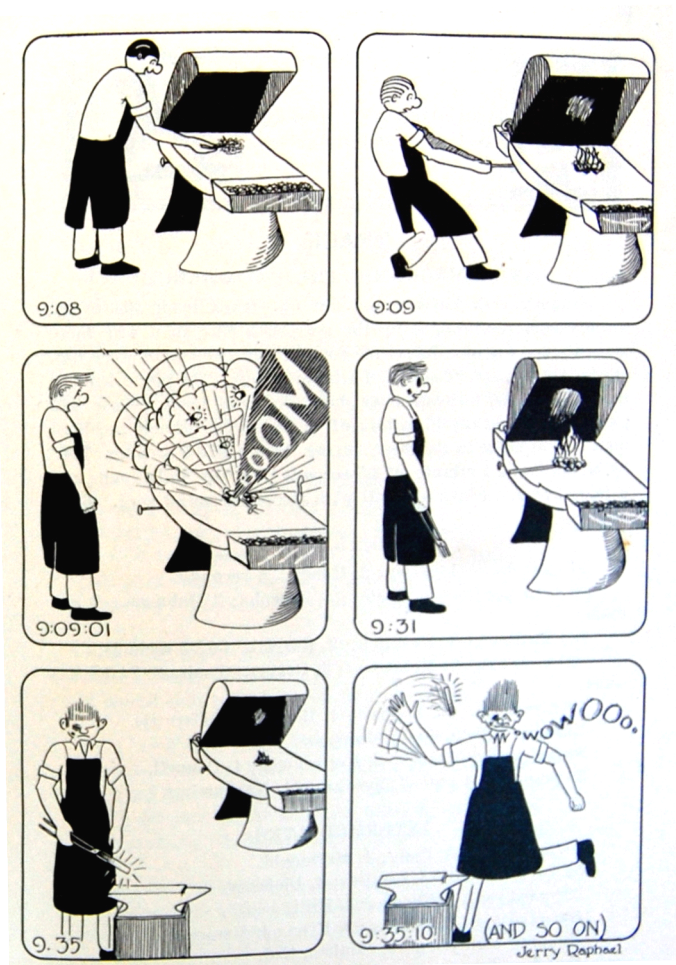
Around 1911, a student with real artistic talent began to draw for the *Artisan*. Philip Oliver Palmstrom '12 created cartoons, ink drawings and covers, which he usually signed as POP. He also served as the art editor of the *Artisan* in his senior year. Some of his cover art, like that below, was so highly regarded that it was used by the magazine as late as the mid-1930s.



A frequently used *Artisan* cover, by Philip O. Palmstrom '12

A Mechanic Arts High School Student Council was formed in 1911. It organized and managed a number of subordinate organizations including the Athletic, Lavatory, Corridor, and Lunchroom Committees; an Outside Patrol; and a School Court, which dealt with offenders of the Council Constitution.

February 1914 saw MAHS' janitor receive a pay raise. The school committee authorized an extra \$2.31 per week "in compensation for the additional work required of him in carrying coal and water to the seventy-four forges in the forge shop... ." As a student, I never once considered that someone actually had to keep these vital materials supplied so that I could hammer to my heart's content, like the student in the *Artisan* cartoon below.



A student's experience in forge shop

The Mechanic Arts Alumni Association held a meeting in June 1915. Afterwards, the association wrote to Dr. Parmenter, "It was most unfortunate that some glassware and fixtures were broken by the pranks of some of the younger members of the Alumni at the meeting on June 3d. We sincerely regret the occurrence." The association also offered to pay for the damage.

In a letter, Headmaster Parmenter wrote that the school had been forced to close for two months in the winter of 1918-1919 because of a lack of fuel for the furnaces.

In June 1915, the teachers held an outing at Houghton's Pond, in the Blue Hills. As reported by the *Artisan*, in the afternoon, the shop teachers faced off against the academic teachers in baseball. According to one teacher's son, the opposing teams were "The Mechanics and the Epidemics." Despite the best efforts of forging-instructor/pitcher Dexter A. Mower '08, who struck out 8 batters in the 6-inning game, the "Epidemics" won, 6-3.

In March 1919 the *Artisan* staff issued an apology for a "very disagreeable matter." It had been discovered that an article published in February had been deliberately copied from the "*American Boy*". The brief statement concluded with, "Let this be a warning to the future contributors to the *Artisan*!"

Alumni Notes for the 1910s

One of the fifteen former MAHS students who died while in military service during World War I was Private **Irving W. Adams**, who had attended Mechanic Arts High School for two years. Born the year that Mechanic Arts opened, Adams died in February 1918, just after his 24th birthday. He was later honored by having both an American Legion post and a park in the center of Roslindale, where he grew up, named for him.

In April 1915, the *Artisan* noted that **Carl Anderson** '96 was captain of the steamship *Nevadan* of the American Hawaiian Steamship Company. Prior to the completion of the Panama Canal in 1914, the *Nevadan*, the first American vessel equipped to burn fuel oil, carried Hawaiian sugar non-stop from the islands to the east coast of the U.S. via Cape Horn.

One Mechanic Arts alumnus who survived the Great War was **Charles H. Dolan Jr.**, of Dorchester, secretary and treasurer of the Class of 1913. After studying electrical engineering at MIT for a year and a half, he went to work in 1915 for Sperry Gyroscope in France. In August 1916, he joined the French Foreign Legion, then immediately transferred to the French Air Service. Following pilot training he was ordered to join the famed Lafayette Escadrille N 124, a fighter squadron composed almost exclusively of American volunteer pilots. In February 1918, after the United States entered the war, the unit was transferred to the American Army as the 103rd Pursuit Squadron. When Charles Dolan died in 1981 at age 86, he was the last surviving member of the 38 American pilots of the Lafayette Escadrille.

Lieutenant **Ronan C. Grady** '01, reported the *Artisan* in March 1916, was commanding officer of the U.S. submarine K-5. After the United States entered World War I in 1917, Grady commanded a submarine division of four subs and was later awarded the Navy Cross for his distinguished service with U.S. Submarine Forces in European waters.

First Lieutenant **Harry E. Hanley**, of Roxbury, worked for Stone and Webster in Georgia before World War I. In October 1917, while acting commanding officer of Co A, 101st Infantry, 26th Division in the San Mihiel sector of France, Lt. Hanley was severely wounded; he would die of his wounds in November. Ironically, the commanding officer of Co A immediately before Lt. Hanley was Capt. Vincent C. Breen, who was severely wounded at about the same time. In fact,

notices of their injuries appeared in the same edition of the *Boston Globe* in November 1918. Vincent Breen would later form a long association with Mechanic Arts and Boston Technical.

Some MAHS graduates went into fields not even remotely related to their high school training. For instance, following graduation from St. Charles' College in Maryland and studies at St. John's Seminary in Brighton, **Waldo C. Hasenfus** '00 was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in June 1912 and was assigned to St. Matthew's Church in Dorchester. He was the brother of Dr. Nathaniel J. Hasenfus, who would head the English department at Mechanic Arts and Boston Tech in the 1940s and 1950s.

Sidney Fiske Kimball '04 earned an A.M. degree in architecture from Harvard in 1912. Later in the decade, he taught at the University of Illinois and the University of Michigan, where he also earned a PhD in Fine Arts in 1915. At this time, he also stopped using his first name. As Fiske Kimball, he wrote the seminal book *Thomas Jefferson, Architect* in 1916, which helped reestablish Jefferson's reputation as the architect of Monticello and helped establish Kimball himself as a top architectural historian. In 1919, the University of Virginia appointed him to head its new Department of Art and Architecture.

Henry I. Marshall, Class of (ca.)1900, became a composer of popular music. In a very successful career that spanned more than 40 years, he wrote over 1000 songs, many in collaboration with lyricist Stanley Murphy. Arguably, their biggest hit song was "Be My Little Baby Bumblebee," published in 1912. It was performed over the years by many well-known entertainers, including Doris Day, Theresa Brewer, the Osmond Brothers and Lawrence Welk. At present, it is featured in many YouTube videos as the music accompanying little girls in tap dance recitals.

Lt. **George D. Murray** USN, MAHS '06, addressed the MAHS graduating class of 1916.

While attending Harvard, Hingham native **Philip C. Nash** '06, frequently wrote letters to the *Artisan* that spoke highly of that school on the Charles River. After receiving BA and MA degrees from Harvard in 1911 and 1912, Nash began his career as one of the engineers in charge of constructing the subway line from Park St. to South Station. During World War II, Captain Nash was the director of the Military Trade School in Washington, DC, which trained men as blacksmith, carpenters, draftsmen, photographers, etc., for the war effort. After the war, he joined Northeastern University and became head of both its civil engineering department and its cooperative education program.

Philip O. Palmstrom '12 furthered his art education at the Massachusetts Normal Art School (now known as the Massachusetts College of Art and Design) in Boston, paying his way by working several hours a day as a draftsman. He graduated from its Drawing and Painting course in 1916, then worked as a commercial artist, and enlisted in the Massachusetts National Guard. During World War I, he served in France with C Company, 101st Engineers, 26th Infantry "Yankee" Division as a member of teams that prepared trenches by stringing and removing barbed wire in "no man's land." Palmstrom was promoted to Master Engineer, an Army noncommissioned officer rank of the time, before returning home at war's end.

After graduating from MIT, **Willard F. Rockwell** '05 held a wide variety of jobs. He was a chemist; managed an industrial engineering consultant service; built, tooled up, and managed an axle factory; and designed and produced military truck axles as an Army civilian during World War I. Following the war, he took over a failed axle company.

Albert I. Stroebe '02, was reported in April 1911 to be working for Shreve, Crump, and Lowe, jewelers. After graduating from MAHS, "Allie" had played third base in 1905-1906 for the Boston Beaneaters, predecessors of the Boston Braves, until his baseball career was cut short by an injury incurred on the field.

Chapter 5 - The 1920s

For America as a whole, this decade may have been the “Roaring 20s,” but for Mechanic Arts High School, no longer held back by longstanding battles over facility and mission, it was truly the “Soaring 20s”.

The school superintendent’s annual report for 1920 gave a short update on the progress which had been made since the adoption of the dual track course of study in 1919. It showed that MAHS had experienced a 37% increase in total school enrollment (from 911 to 1250 students) since September 1918, the last year of admissions under the “Prosser Plan”. During this same period there had also been fewer dropouts and transfers out in the upper classes. Both of these changes reversed negative trends that began when the Prosser course of study was adopted in 1914. The update concluded, “All who are interested in the school seem convinced that the new courses provide distinctly better training for those who cannot go to college, and tend to arouse ambition, while furnishing adequate preparation for those who wish further and higher education.”

Separately, the superintendent in 1920 reported that the annual schoolboy street parade consisted of eight regiments and represented all high schools except MAHS. Although it had been introduced to the school system in 1864, and had been required for most Boston high school boys since 1912, military drill had not yet made its appearance at Belvidere and Dalton Sts.

Starting in 1923, the amount of time devoted to English in the first two years was doubled.

The start of the 1921 school year saw the arrival of two teachers who would be fixtures on the MAHS and Boston Tech landscape for more than 40 years. Arthur R. Racine, a 1911 graduate of Clark College, would teach French. James H. Holland, a Boston College alumnus, was hired as a mathematics instructor.

Undoubtedly, however, the biggest news in 1923 for Mechanic Arts High School was the retirement in June of Headmaster Dr. Charles W. Parmenter. After having literally lived the position for 29 years, he turned over the office to Adelbert H. Morrison, head of the MAHS science department.

Dr. Parmenter’s portrait was painted by well known local artist Walter Gilman Page and subsequently purchased by the alumni association in recognition of the headmaster’s faithful service to Mechanic Arts. The association presented the portrait to the school, where it hung over the stage of the assembly hall for many years.

The MAHS Alumni Association hosted a dinner at the Boston City Club in April 1923 to pay tribute to Dr. Parmenter, the man it credited with developing the school. Noting that “No one in the future will be called upon to do the pioneer work that has been accomplished in the last thirty years”, it invited Massachusetts Governor Channing H. Cox, the chairman of the Boston School Committee, Superintendent of Schools Jeremiah E. Burke, and other notables to assist in honoring the headmaster.

The superintendent's report for 1925 contained a short, but very positive, message on Mechanic Arts High School. The report repeated the same "It is not a trade school" message, which had not changed since the school was first described in Dr. Seaver's plan of 1889. It also declared that total enrollment had rapidly declined from a high of 1506 to a low of 911 during the four years the school operated under the "Prosser Plan." The report even speculated that the reason for this drop in enrollment was parents' unhappiness over their sons being unable to continue their education at higher institutions. The report called MAHS graduates "successful" and noted that an April 1925 study had determined that roughly 85% of them were in jobs "requiring knowledge fairly well related to their kind of training." And, finally, it commended the school for experiencing comparatively little truancy, which it felt was the result of its students' "being interested in something he likes and can do."



In April 1926 MAHS opened a sheet metal shop on the second floor of a former livery stable at 10 Scotia St., across from the main building. And, it equipped the ground floor of that building as a gymnasium! It wasn't that "large, well appointed gymnasium" of students' dreams, but at least it was a gym.

260 members of the MAHS senior class received some unwelcome publicity from Boston newspapers for their actions late one night in May 1926. After leaving a banquet at the Brunswick Hotel the students began singing, formed a "snake dance", and paraded down Boylston St. from Copley Square. When they started to interfere with traffic on Boylston and Washington Streets, a squad of police attempted to break up the crowd. At Dock Square, the police charged into the students, but the students escaped by dashing between cars and running down side streets. Fortunately there were no injuries. There's no mention made in the school's records of the 'conversation' Headmaster Morrison might have had with those students the next day.

Asked in 1926 about the lack of military drill instruction at MAHS, Mr. Morrison stated, "I am personally in favor of military drill in boys' high schools and intend to seek to have it approved for the Mechanic Arts High School as soon as the necessary facilities are provided." In January 1927, after being made mandatory for all high school boys, military drill finally took its place in the MAHS curriculum. Unfortunately, the facility provided for drill was the gym underneath the sheet metal shop. The addition of 1000 rifle racks stole what little space had existed there.

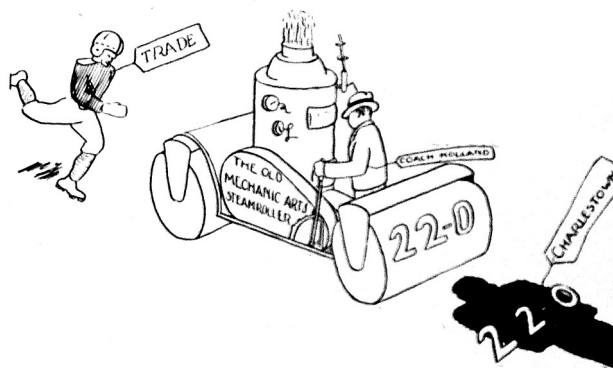
Major Peter V. Breen, who had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for gallantry during World War I, was selected as the school's drill instructor in 1927. Major (later Massachusetts State Guard Brigadier General) Breen was to serve in that capacity until the 1960s, when military drill was eliminated from the course of study at all Boston high schools.

In letters they exchanged in 1986, John A. Hrones '30 and his MAHS classmate Frederick C. Johnson recalled Major Breen. "Remember his boots, britches and riding crop?", asked Fred. John definitely remembered him, writing that on their first day of military drill instruction the major "had us all stand at attention until several boys fainted and keeled over. He then went on to show us how to do it so that that would not happen. ... Major Breen was a toughie but most of us got to like him."

John Hrones told his family, in a 1985 letter, of a life-changing experience he had at MAHS. He noted that he and the boys he grew up with in Roslindale all were "members of families of limited means and the prospect of having the money to attend college was almost non existent." Although he had taken the college course at Mechanic Arts, "As late as my junior year in high school, I had no plans to attend college." His lack of plans would change when he was called in to meet with Mr. Ginn, a guidance counselor. Mr. Ginn, very surprised to learn that John did not intend to go to college, "pressed hard saying that I must go and that the first step was to take the College Entrance Examination Board Tests coming up in a few months. He said that if I could not afford the fee of \$10 that he would pay it." John decided not only to take the tests but also to pay for them himself. As a result, John Hrones, who was awarded a Franklin Medal at graduation, earned admission to MIT, from which he would earn a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in 1934, and then master's and PhD degrees. Years later, Mr. Ginn invited him back to address the Mechanic Arts graduating class.

In his letter, Fred Johnson '30, who was John Hrones' classmate at MIT as well as at MAHS, recalled two other experience at Mechanic Arts. He wrote, "I also remember when several of us had to be excused from part of his (a chemistry teacher's) classes to play hockey, it was always, 'that dam hockey team.'" He also recalled when Mr. Dole, the school custodian, "caught you, me and a couple of other hockey players with all our hockey gear riding the elevator reserved for teachers only. We had to report to the principal."

At the beginning of each school years from the 1920s through the 1940s, all MAHS students were given a small guidebook called the *Buff and Blue Key*. Its stated purpose was "to help you become acquainted with the customs of this school." Part of what it provided was a list of the teachers and staff, the course of study, a short history of the school, clubs and other activities, and various helpful hints, such as how to write a note requesting to leave a study room. In short, it gave students the rules of the road.



As the above *Artisan* cartoon shows, Mechanic Arts High School's football team was having some degree of success in 1928. Their 22-0 win against Charlestown came on a brand new field in the Fens, but some of its games were still played at Braves Field, including a 0-0 tie with Hyde Park and a 20-6 win over Commerce, which scored its first touchdown in two years (ouch!). In these years, MAHS competed not only against other Boston high schools but also against some private prep schools, such as The Middlesex School in Concord.

Other MAHS sports teams played non-city teams as well. Newspaper clippings from the period show that the MAHS swimming team beat Malden and the hockey team beat Watertown High 1-0.



Mechanic Arts sports records

In the above cartoon, from June 1929, the *Artisan* reviewed Mechanic Arts' sports successes over the years.

The *Boston Herald* reported in March 1929 that former superintendent of Boston schools Stratton B. Brooks had declared, after visiting German schools, that the Mechanic Arts High School was superior to anything he saw in Europe.

Alumni Notes for the 1920s

In June 1927, just one month after Charles Lindbergh's pioneering flight to Europe, Army Lt. **Albert F. Hegenberger** '13, from South Boston, flew as navigator/co-pilot on the first non-stop flight from the United States mainland to Hawaii. Although not a solo effort like Lindbergh's, Hegenberger's feat of successfully navigating to a destination as small as Hawaii in a 25 hour flight covering 2400 miles was a much more technically demanding one than locating Europe. Lindbergh himself is said to have called it "the most perfectly organized and carefully planned flight ever attempted." For their accomplishment, Lt. Lester J. Maitland, the pilot, and Hegenberger were each awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by President Calvin Coolidge. Separately, the War Department awarded the pair the Mackay Trophy for the most meritorious flight of the year.

In July 1927, after a round of receptions in cities around the country, Lts. Hegenberger and Maitland visited Boston. There, they were presented to an admiring crowd of 25,000 people in South Boston by Maj. Gen Edward L. Logan, commander of the 26th (Yankee) Division, Massachusetts National Guard. A bill was introduced in the state legislature in January 1928 to rename the Boston Airport in East Boston as the Albert F. Hegenberger Aviation Field to honor the lieutenant. However, the bill was killed in May, supposedly because it was a universal custom to name airports after dead aviators, not living ones. As it turns out, the airport retained its original name until 1952, when it was named after Gen. Logan - who never even flew in an airplane.

It was reported by the *Artisan* in February 1929 that Lt. Hegenberger had proposed to the National Aviation Council a novel way to disperse fog over airports. Calculations showed that burning 13 tons of coal an hour would clear fog of average thickness and drift from an area of 400 square yards. This demonstrates that even very smart and accomplished people can have an occasional bad idea.

In 1925 and 1926, **Willard F. Rockwell** '05 was issued US patents for a "Railway Truck", a "Road Car", a "Rear Axle Assembly for Automobiles", a "Double-reduction Bus Axle", a "Worm Gear for Automobile Axles", and a "Differential Axle Assembly". Rockwell was also busy making business deals at this time, merging the small axle factory he had bought in 1919 with his biggest competitor, Timken-Detroit.

During the 1920s, **Ernest G. Small** ca.'05 served as an instructor in the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery at the U.S. Naval Academy, navigator of the USS *Detroit* (CL-8), and commanding officer of the USS *Brooks* (DD-232). He also attended the Naval War College, served in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and was aide and flag secretary to a fleet commander.

Fiske Kimball '04 left the University of Virginia in 1923 to head New York University's fine arts department. In 1924, he became the chairman of the restoration committee at Thomas

Jefferson's home, Monticello, where he supervised the restoration of the house and grounds. He also served on the Advisory Committee of Architects for restoration of Colonial Williamsburg for 25 years. Kimball was appointed director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1925, a position he held until shortly before his death in 1955.

Commander **Ronan C. Grady** '01 was assigned as Professor of Naval Science at Harvard University in September 1927.

Philip C. Nash '06 served as dean of Ohio's Antioch College from 1921 until 1929. He then became the executive director of the League of Nations Association, an organization formed to promote international justice, collective security and a permanent peace between nations based upon the ideals of the League of Nations.

The Class of 1916 held their 10th reunion in December 1926. Of the 37 class members who attended, there were "three dentists, one lawyer, two grocery-men, one plasterer-contractor, two purchasing agents, one salesman of ladies' gowns, one salesman of furniture, one cutlery dealer, one teacher, one laundry-route foreman, one or more mechanical engineers, and miscellaneous designers, draftsmen, mechanics, etc." Mr. **Lester Perkins** '06, secretary of the alumni association, added that his lists of graduates also included doctors, ministers, undertakers, butchers, and corset salesmen.

Chapter 6 - The 1930s

There do not seem to have been any dramatic events at MAHS during the 1930s. However, the school, its students, and their families were definitely not immune to the effects of the signature event of this decade, “The Great Depression,” a worldwide economic calamity.

The Mechanic Arts High School Alumni Association maintained an Alumni Emergency Fund during this period. Although it is not recorded why this fund was established, a few examples illustrate how it was used.

- Mr. Morrison requested the association to provide one student with \$2.50 for carfare and lunches from February 1931 to the end of the school year. The alumni agreed, asked the headmaster to pay the boy the amount weekly, and requested Morrison to explain to him that the amount was a loan that was to be repaid “when able”.
- In April 1931 the headmaster asked the alumni association for \$52 for use of the baseball team, since MAHS didn’t have enough funds for the team’s most urgent needs – 8 pairs of shoes @ \$4.00 each, 8 bats @ \$.75 each, and 8 pairs of sliding pads @ \$1.75 each.
- One Mechanic Arts student’s family consisted of six children, no father, and a mother who made sandwiches in a lunch room. They barely made ends meet and could not afford eyeglasses for the pupil, whom the headmaster called an excellent boy. The alumni association provided the \$5.00 needed for his glasses in December 1931.
- The association also gave the school \$58.00 for suits for the track team. In February 1932, while Mr. Morrison was traveling through Europe while on a one year leave of absence, acting headmaster Edwin F. Field thanked the alumni and promised that “I shall make certain that they know to whom they are indebted.”

In 1932, a teacher from English High School became the head of the history department at MAHS. He remained until 1935, when he transferred back to English to head that school’s history department. This was not the last Mechanic Arts High School would see of Mr. D. Leo Daley.

In the February 1932 issue of the *Artisan*, Henry E. Seaboyer '32 published some interesting MAHS facts, including:

- there are 11,321 panes of glass in the Mechanic Arts building;
-
- a graduate of Mechanic Arts entering Technology, i.e., MIT, is given credit in forging, and does not have to take it again; and
-
- the 1930 football team broke a fourteen-year jinx by defeating Dorchester High, 6-0.

Unfortunately, by October 1932 MAHS was once again under Dorchester's spell, losing to them, 21-0, at Fenway Park, shown below.



1932 Mechanic Arts football game at Fenway Park

During 1932, the school formed its first cadet "Trick Squad", which learned and perfected its drill maneuvers during many months of practice before school. It performed its routine at both the school and the armory. By 1934, the activity had become so popular that there were two squads and performed at Boston Garden and the Commonwealth Armory as well as at the school.

In November 1935, Secundo A. Mazzuchelli '28 and Charles Plumb '28 were appointed Boston junior high school shop teachers. Both would be teachers at Boston Tech by the time I attended the school, though Mr. Mazzuchelli changed his name to Mr. Ricci in the mid-1950s.

Mechanic Arts held an assembly in May 1936 that featured renowned American poet Robert Frost. Mr. Frost spoke of his friendships with English department head Charles Lane Hanson and headmaster Morrison, with whom he had attended Lawrence (MA) High School. The poet, who had already won two of his eventual four Pulitzer Prizes, then recited a number of his poems, including his arguably best known ones, "Mending Wall" and "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening".

The 248 members of the MAHS Class of 1932 were subjects of a follow-up study performed by the Boston Public School System's Vocational Guidance Department. This study's goal was to determine "how these young people made their way in the world nine years after graduation." Study results reported in the school superintendent's 1941 annual report show that:

- Course A, called the Shop Course, prepared students for technical schools such as Wentworth Institute and Northeastern University, while Course B, called the College Course, prepared its student for the entrance requirements of first-class colleges. (This

may not have interested the average reader, but as a 1962 and 1964 graduate of Northeastern, it certainly captured *my* attention.)

- Of the class members reporting:
 - 31 graduates were working as machinists.
 - 13 class members had become engineers.
 - One class member was in the Diplomatic Service.
 - One graduate had gone into farming – blueberries and poultry.
 - Eight members were in the Army; three were in the Navy.
 - Four were still in college (two in graduate school).
- 93% of Shop Course graduates and 83% of College Course graduates were employed.
- 14 Shop Course graduates wished they had attended a different school, while only one College Course graduate did.
- Six members suggested adding Public Speaking to the MAHS curriculum.
- 20 Shop Course graduates rated history as their least useful subject.
- 18 from the College Course rated foreign languages as their least useful subject.
- Mathematics was rated the most useful subject by graduates of both the Shop and College courses.
- Top wages were reported by a New York band member (Shop Course) and an engineer for Standard Oil (College Course). Both earned \$75 per week.
- There was only a \$3.80 difference in median weekly salaries between the Shop Course (\$31.20) and College Course (\$35.00) groups.
- College degrees had been earned by five graduates of the Shop Course and 26 from the College Course.

Len Dressler '41 recalls, "During the 1939 football season I was the third string quarterback. Our first team had two extraordinary athletes, John Yonaker (Receiving End) and Gerry Cowhig (Quarterback). We had a fair 1939 season and the 1940 outlook was very promising with these two stars onboard. I was a junior that year as were the two star players. Somehow they did not return in the fall of 1940. What I heard was that Frank Leahy (of future Notre Dame fame) had the two players transferred to a prep school prior to their acceptance to Boston College, where

Leahy was then the football coach. Records on the internet confirm that Leahy transferred to Notre Dame and the two players must have moved with him. ... Cowhig did move on to play with the Cleveland Rams who became the Los Angeles Rams. ... Gerry Cowhig doubled for Victor Mature in the football story movie with Lucille Ball in 1949 when he was still a pro."

Additional information obtained online shows that Gerry Cowhig did transfer to a private prep school before enrolling at Notre Dame. However, John Yonaker didn't return to MAHS in the fall of 1940 because he had graduated with the Class of 1940. But he, like Cowhig, later played for Frank Leahy at Notre Dame.

Alumni Notes for the 1930s

Ordinary people probably would have been content with making the first non-stop flight to Hawaii, but **Albert F. Hegenberger** '13 was anything but ordinary. In May 1932, at Patterson Field in Dayton OH, he again made aviation history. Flying a standard Army airplane equipped with special instrumentation, Capt. Hegenberger took off - alone, with no check pilot - with the cockpit completely covered, flew ten miles away from the airport, then circled and returned to make a perfect landing. Although other instrument-only flights had been flown previously, including one by his friend Jimmy Doolittle, Hegenberger's was the world's first solo flight using only instruments. He was awarded the Collier Trophy and another Distinguished Flying Cross for this accomplishment.

In June 1934, ten MAHS alumni received degrees from MIT. Of those, four - including **J. A. Hrones** '30, **H. Mazer**, and **A. N. Mooradian** - returned to begin graduate studies in September.

The February 1934 edition of the *Artisan* noted that "Honorable **Edward F. McLaughlin** '00 has been appointed Fire Commissioner, and **Martin F. Tobin** '23 is the City Councillor from Ward 15, Dorchester."

Philip C. Nash '06 was selected to be the president of the University of Toledo in 1933. He was to add to its facilities and increase its student population during one of its most difficult times, the Great Depression.

The April 1932 edition of the *Artisan* published a letter from **Guy A. Richardson** '00 in which he summarized his professional life. After a one-year post-graduate course at MAHS, he began his electrical railway system career with the Boston Elevated. Starting as a shop helper, he rose through the ranks to become a motorman; a fireman; an engineer; and, finally, the person in charge of car repairs. He continued his work in the transportation field at Stone & Webster in Michigan, with the Seattle Electric Company, with the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company, International Railway Company in Buffalo, and finally with the Chicago Surface Lines, the world's largest street car system. In April 1932, the *Artisan* announced that Guy A. Richardson had been elected president of the Chicago Surface Lines.

Richardson stated that "it is usually impossible for boys of high school age to appreciate the advantages a school like M.A.H.S. makes available to them until after they are away from it." He concluded by saying that he "appreciated very much the opportunity of working after school in

the shops on the two afternoons a week that power was kept on in those days, and made my first steam generator and electrical generator during those periods."

Willard F. Rockwell '05 continued to receive patents for his inventions. These included a "Differential Axle", a "Vehicle Drive and Braking Apparatus", a "Tandem Axle Road Vehicle" and a "Register Box (i.e., a water meter) Window Wiper." His business success continued as well. During the 1930s, Rockwell: became the president of Timken-Detroit and the chairman of Standard Steel Spring; and managed gas and water meter companies for the Mellon family. He also served as a Quartermaster Corps reserve officer in Washington, DC.

Ernest Small ca.'05 was on the Staff of the Naval War College from 1931 until 1934, served as first lieutenant of the USS *Oklahoma* (BB-37), and commanded Destroyer Division 3 from 1938 until 1940.

More than 300 Mechanic Arts graduates gathered in May 1938 at the Hotel Vendome for a reunion, an account of which appeared in the *Boston Post*. Someone wrote on a newspaper clipping saved in a school scrapbook in the City of Boston Archives, "It is interesting to note that **"Doc" Mooney**, School Boy Sports Editor, and **Gabe Stern**, Advertising Department, are both graduates of the Mechanic Arts High School."

One big topic of discussion that evening was why young men schooled in the mechanic arts should find such success in the professions. For instance, **Guy A. Richardson** '00 had become president of the Chicago Surface Lines; Rev. **William J. Logue**, S.J., was assistant pastor at Boston College's St. Ignatius parish; **James D. Henderson**, the alumni association president, was head of the Brookline Federal Loan and Savings Bank; and **Charles C. Dasey** '00 was passenger manager for Cunard White Star Lines. The oldest graduate at the reunion was **Ralph H. Knapp** '96, head of the mechanical drawing department at MAHS. A highlight of the occasion was the telephone call placed to 86 year old retired headmaster Charles W. Parmenter in Vermont.

Chapter 7 - The 1940s

The most significant events for Mechanic Arts High School during the 1940s were the death of a legend, a name change, and World War II.

Dr. Charles W. Parmenter died in August 1940. In a short speech to students at the beginning of school in September, Headmaster Morrison paid tribute to Dr. Parmenter's long and significant service to the school by noting, "He guided the school through its infancy and early youth in such a way that it became known as one of the best of its type. ... The school he guided and developed in its early days will long stand as a memorial to his wisdom and unselfish devotion." Although almost certainly unknown to most students, it was Dr. Parmenter's oil portrait that hung over the left side of the stage in the school's Assembly Hall for many years.

In 1941, MAHS found that, once again, it was unable to accommodate all regular applicants for admission. Mr. Morrison believed one reason for this was the excellent reputation that the school had established. He predicted that more students would be turned away in 1942, even though it was likely there would be a MAHS "colony in the Latin School." It turned out that, even with its freshmen housed in an annex at Latin, Mechanic Arts was forced to drop its entire ninth grade program. Students who would have previously gone to MAHS in the ninth grade were forced to take that year's courses in junior high school or at other high schools around the city.

Interestingly, just three years after the big alumni reunion in 1938, James P. Connelly '41 wrote an article for The *1941 Buff and Blue Yearbook*, renamed The *Technician* a few years later. In it, he identified his class' greatest need as "an ACTIVE Alumni Association." He called the present association "dormant as far as recent classes are concerned." Unless the association had experienced a rapid drop-off in overall activity since 1938, maybe it was focusing too much on its oldest members and not concentrating enough energy on the younger alumni.

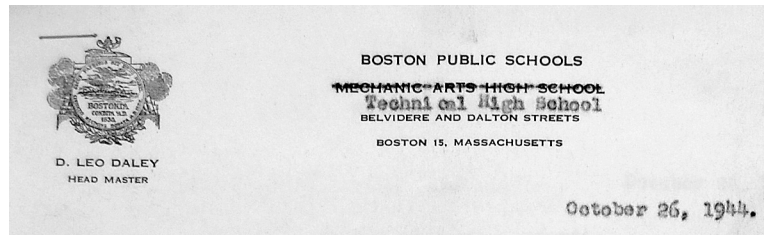
Like schools across the country, MAHS did its part to help during World War II. Because of its particular equipment and its teachers' skills, however, the school was uniquely prepared to answer the country's call. In May 1941, before America formally entered the war, Mr. Morrison wrote an *Artisan* article in which he stated that more than 100 seniors had been released to produce material for national defense and the school's machine shops were being used to train skilled workers.

Mechanic Arts High School lent even more direct assistance to the national defense effort once the US was engaged in the war. It instructed Navy personnel in machine shop practice, math, and mechanical drawing; trained employees of the Watertown Arsenal; taught courses to "girl trainees" from MIT's machine shops; gave a pre-induction course to enlistees of the Army Air Corps; taught Coast Guardsmen; and provided drafting classes to groups from the U.S. Army Signal Corps and the Army Radio School.

Throughout the war years, the school also offered afternoon and evening classes for outside students. In his autobiography, *Teddy Ballgame*, Ted Williams recalls that he and Red Sox teammate Johnny Pesky took evening classes in 1942 at Mechanic Arts to brush up on mathematics before they entered military service to begin their training as naval aviators. The

Christian Science Monitor even ran a picture in July of the two players in class at the school, just 7/10s of a mile from Fenway Park.

Little was wasted on the home front during World War II, as can be seen below in a sample of school letterhead from 1944.



John T. Nykiel '45 presented a student's view of the need for, and the impact of, its new name in an *Artisan* article entitled "Farewell Mechanic Arts, Hail Technical." He felt that, over the years, its old name had become much too confusing, causing many people to conclude wrongly that it offered merely extended versions of some junior high school courses. He also believed that many people considered MAHS to be just another kind of trade school. Consequently, many students who could have benefited from its excellent college preparatory course were dissuaded from attending. And too many boys who should have attended a trade school went to MAHS instead. His article finished by praising Boston Technical High School's excellent training in both college preparatory and technical engineering subjects and by reminding students that they were privileged to attend "this grand school." Nykiel's article also reported two interesting facts – (1) the school had graduated nearly 6000 men since 1896, and (2) it had the highest cost per pupil in the city.

In June 1944, Adelbert H. Morrison retired. Mr. Morrison had been the school's headmaster since 1923, had served as head of the science department prior to that, and had taught at the school since 1904. At the time of his retirement, Mr. Morrison stated quite clearly that Mechanic Arts needed a new building in a new location, as the school's normal enrollment was between 1600 and 1700 students in a building designed to hold 1250.

In September 1944, D. Leo Daley, head of the history department at Boston English High School, was named to replace Mr. Morrison. Mr. Daley had previously served at MAHS as head of the history department from 1932-1935.

The new headmaster told a newspaper shortly after his selection that he was concerned with a decrease in enrollment at Technical High. He believed the decrease was caused by economic conditions that allowed students with even one year of Tech's training to get a good paying job and drop out of school; in essence, it was a victim of its own success. Using words similar to those used by President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural address, D. Leo Daley said, "There is too much talk of what the nation owes its youth and not enough said about the obligations the youth has to its country." The key point Daley said he wanted to make with the pupils was that their greatest responsibility was to finish their high school education.

Four women teachers - Miss Margaret G. Quirk (math), Miss Florence Magner (math), Miss Claire G. Ruane (history), and Miss Bernice A. Smith (math) - were hired for the first school

year under the new Boston Tech name. Since 1920, no woman teacher had worked at the school for a full year. According to the *Artisan*, Miss Smith, whose brother was a MAHS graduate, had earned her private pilot's license just before school opened.

Some of Technical High's teachers joined the military during the war. Among them were:

- James H. Holland, affectionately known as "Dutchie" by students of my generation. In addition to teaching, Mr. Holland had been coach of all sports at MAHS before being called into the Army Air Corps in 1942. In the Army, he was the supervisor of 142 flying schools in the Eastern Flying Training Command;



James H. Holland in uniform

- Howard Baumeister, teacher and MAHS graduate, who became a Chief Machinist Mate in the Navy;
- Arthur Klein, who served as an Army Air Corps psychologist and statistician;
- Benjamin Lieberfarb, who headed an information and education office. He also served as an education and vocation counselor while in the Army Air Corps;
- William N. Mistler, who served as a machinist's mate aboard the battleship USS *Texas* in both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters;
- Warren J. Moran, who was an Instructor and Training Officer and Officer-In-Charge of Training Aids at various Navy bases. At some time during his service, he broke his arm while on the deck of a destroyer during a hurricane.
- Capt. Daniel F. O'Connell, who directed ground training at several Air Corps pilot schools.

The school reported to the school superintendent in 1945 that 1009 former students had joined the US military in WWII. The Class of 1946 yearbook paid tribute to 109 men from the

school who gave their lives in the Second World War. In 1947, Guidance Counselor Herbert P. Carter noted in the *Artisan* that the classes of 1944, 1945, and 1946 had generously provided a bronze war memorial tablet. This plaque, located in a corridor opposite the headmaster's office, was hung there to honor "all the boys from this school, more than two thousand in number, who served their country in World War II. Especially is it intended to be a constant reminder of the heroism of the hundred and twenty boys who made the supreme sacrifice in that terrible conflict." Mr. Carter's figures differ from, and are probably more accurate than, those reported earlier. I wonder whatever became of this bronze tablet?

In 1946, the *Artisan* reported that Headmaster Daley had told 'someone' that Technical High might have a new building, but that it would not be built until after 'they' graduate. Was this just wishful thinking on his part?

In 1947, the Boston Tech Alumni Association announced to its members that former English department head Charles L. Hanson "has seen fit to write an interesting and complete history of our school. Included in this rare volume will be pictures of the school and its teachers – past and present." There are no records to show if this history, to have been priced at \$2.50, was ever produced. If I'd been able to locate a copy, it would have saved me many hours of research and writing.

In 1948, Mr. Walter T. Durnan, head of the science department at South Boston High School, became Boston Tech's fifth headmaster when D. Leo Daley was promoted to assistant school superintendent.

Another leadership change occurred in September 1949. Mr. Herman G. McGrath succeeded James Holland as Boston Tech's head coach when Mr. Holland became head of the mathematics department. Mr. McGrath, a history teacher since coming to the school in 1929, had previously served as Coach Holland's assistant; he had also filled in as head coach from 1942 until 1945 while Mr. Holland was serving in the military.



Assembly Hall in 1949

Military Alumni Notes for the 1940s

Many Mechanic Arts and Boston Technical alumni served their country with distinction during World War II in a variety of roles.

- **William M. Bennett** '40, of Roxbury, served as an enlisted member of the Tuskegee Airman, the first African Americans trained to fly and maintain combat aircraft. Prior to being drafted, "Buck", as he was called in the MAHS yearbook, worked at the Boston Naval Shipyard as a marine engineering technician; in the Army Air Forces he trained and worked as an aviation mechanic. Following his military service, William Bennett moved back to Boston and resumed his career at the shipyard, from which he retired in 1973.

Friends recall that, although he never spoke much about the difficulties he faced in the Army, he was always very proud of having been a Tuskegee Airman. In March 2007, he was one of more than 300 surviving members who represented the Tuskegee Airmen organization when it was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal by President George W. Bush at the U.S. Capital.

- **James F. Berry**, from Dorchester, became a captain in the Army Corps of Engineers. He and a Lt. Ebbeson from Roslindale were taken prisoner near the walled city of St. Malo, France while on a volunteer mission. Using some German language skills acquired at MAHS, Berry discovered that all the German enlisted soldiers were ready to surrender; he also managed to persuade one of them to cut a vital German communications line. After a lot more talking and a heavy American artillery barrage, the German officer in charge indicated that he, too, wished to surrender. Berry and Ebbeson obligingly marched the entire German force out of the walled city.
- Captain **Ronan C. Grady** '01 was assigned to the Boston Navy Yard as Captain of the Yard, a position in which he was responsible for military, police, and fire-fighting functions in the shipyard. Captain Grady read the orders when "Old Ironsides", the frigate USS Constitution, was recommissioned in August 1940 on direct order of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. During World War II, he presided at the commissioning of many of the new warships built there; his wife served, too, christening a number of ships at their launchings.
- **Len Dressler** '41 went into the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP), designed to provide engineering training to academically-gifted enlisted men. When the ASTP was suddenly disbanded in early 1944, most of its members were immediately reassigned to infantry units and quickly shipped to France to help fight in the Battle of the Bulge. Len, however, who'd been trained as an aircraft mechanic before the war, was reassigned to the Army Air Corps, which probably saved his life. He was subsequently trained as a gunner on a low altitude attack bomber for the expected invasion of Japan, which never occurred.

- **Albert F. Hegenberger** '13 continued his long and distinguished Air Corps career. As a colonel, he commanded the 11th Bombardment Wing at Hickam Field, Hawaii during the attack on Pearl Harbor. He later served in various stateside assignments before, as a major general, he assumed command of the 14th Air Force in China near the end of the war. Following the war, General Hegenberger commanded the 1st Air Division and helped develop an atomic explosion detection system.
- **Vernon B. Howland** '42, of the Back Bay, served as a Marine Corps private on Guadalcanal. He told his mother in a letter that "there has been some action on this island, but that is all I can say."
- Lt. **Joseph W. Lyons** '23 served as a Navy chaplain in the South Pacific. Before entering the Navy in 1942, Fr. Lyons, originally from Roxbury, had served at St. Anne's church in Somerville for nine years.
- My uncle **Sidney W. Moffatt** '34, of Roxbury, enlisted in the US Navy and served as an electrician's mate on the 70-foot wooden submarine chaser SC-514, which operated in the Solomon Islands area of the South Pacific. Following his military service, Sid returned to his job with the Boston Edison Company, working in operations and eventually becoming a maintenance supervisor at the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth.
- Captain **George D. Murray** '05, originally from Dorchester, commanded the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* in 1942 during Doolittle's Raid and the Battle of Midway, a turning point of the War in the Pacific. He was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism and was later promoted to Rear Admiral. As Commander Marianas at the end of the war, Vice Admiral Murray, acting on behalf of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, accepted the Japanese surrender of the Carolines at Truk Atoll.
- **John B. Roach** '43, like many other African Americans during World War II, had to fight just to go to war. He grew up in the South End and developed an interest in aviation at an early age, often riding the East Boston ferry to Logan Airport just to watch airplanes take off and land. In a 2001 oral interview, he recalled thinking, "Somehow I'm going to fly airplanes."

Shortly after graduating from MAHS, John tried to enlist in the Army Air Forces (AAF) to join a program at Tuskegee Army Air Field in Alabama that trained black pilots. Turned down at 10 greater Boston area recruiting stations, John persevered and finally found a recruiter who agreed to sign him up. On the train from Boston to Washington, DC, bound for basic training in Mississippi, he rode in a seat and in a car of his own choosing. In the nation's capital, however, John ran into Jim Crow laws for the first time in his life when a policeman ordered him to move to the car just behind the coal car, the only place African Americans were allowed to ride in the South at that time.

John Roach overcame the extreme societal and military hardships faced by all the Tuskegee Airmen, successfully completed his training, and became a B-25 bomber pilot. He never saw overseas service, however; when World War II ended, his unit was awaiting assignment to the Pacific theater.

- **Willard F. Rockwell** '05 was recalled to military service as an assistant to the Chief of the Motor Transport Division in October 1941. In April 1942, he was appointed to head up efforts of the US Maritime Commission to replace the large number of ships sunk by German U-boats. Under his direction, the commission set new world records for shipbuilding.
- **Ernest G. Small** ca.'05, headed the Department of Ordnance and Gunnery at the Naval Academy from 1940 until 1942. As commanding officer of the cruiser USS *Salt Lake City* (CA-25), he was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism during nighttime action off Savo Island in October 1942. Before his death in 1944, Rear Admiral Small was also awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and Gold Star in lieu of the second Legion of Merit for service on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet and as Commander of a Cruiser Division. The destroyer USS *Ernest G. Small* (DD-838) was named in his honor in 1945.

Among those alumni who didn't return from World War II were:

- Private **Thomas J. Attridge** '35, of Dorchester, who was killed in action in Italy. He'd been a member of the MAHS band and the track team, and had been wounded previously, during the Sicily campaign.
- Staff Sergeant **Paul K. Hayes** '38, who was killed in an air attack on Borneo after having been overseas for 18 months.
- Pfc. **James E. Howley** '43, of Dorchester, who'd been a football player at Mechanic Arts High School and was killed in action in France.
- **William Maguire** '39, of West Roxbury, a draftsman at Stone & Webster before entering the Army in 1941 and winning his pilot's wings in 1942. While flying a P-47 fighter, he shot down two German aircraft. He was killed later in the war.
- **George A. Moran**, '35, U.S. Army, who was killed in the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor;
- Private **Joseph Zappala** '38, of Roslindale. A U.S. Army Air Corps mechanic, he was killed in Japan's attack on Hickam Field, Hawaii, just three days before his 22nd birthday;

A particularly tragic, yet heroic, story is that of Marine Staff Sergeant **William J. Lynch** of Mechanic Arts' Class of 1937. Billy Lynch, from Dorchester, enlisted in the United States Marine Corps before graduating from MAHS. Stationed in the Philippines when the Japanese invaded, he was taken prisoner when the garrison on Corregidor surrendered in May 1942. SSgt Lynch was interned in at least two Japanese prisoner of war camps, escaped multiple times, but was recaptured and severely beaten. He is believed to have been sent from a prison camp at Mukden, Manchuria to a special camp in Lushun (formerly Port Arthur) Manchuria, where he was tortured and executed in 1945; his remains have never been found. SSgt William Lynch is the only one of 2000 inmates at the Mukden camp who is unaccounted for.



Marine Staff Sergeant William J. Lynch '37

In the 1950s, the City of Boston honored SSgt. Lynch by declaring the junction of Neponset Avenue and Victory Road in Dorchester to be William J. Lynch Square.

In August 2010, **Peter Bishop** '57, **Joe Zimbone** '58, and I attended a lecture given by retired Marine Gunnery Sergeant Roy Weaver at the New England Historic Genealogy Society. GySgt Weaver, age 91, had been Billy Lynch's bunkmate at the Mukden camp; he spoke of the horrendous conditions at the Mukden camp and of SSgt Lynch's continued resistance and attempts to escape.

Non-Military Alumni Notes for the 1940s

John A. Hrones '30 was appointed an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at MIT in 1941. During World War II, he worked on military projects at the MIT Servomechanism Laboratory and the Draper Instrumentation Laboratory. Dr. Hrones received his PhD in 1942 and was made a full professor at MIT in 1948.

After being elected moderator of the American Unitarian Association, University of Toledo president Dr. **Philip C. Nash** '06 called for the creation of "an international police force to which all nations including ourselves should be subject, strong enough to prevent future international 'brigandage.'" He also stated that "unless we can take the leadership in promoting the slow increase of mutual good over the world, the future is indeed dark."

Philip O. Palmstrom '12 had become an instructor at the Massachusetts School of Art in 1935. His granddaughter Mary Palmstrom relates that, in 1943, he "was chosen to be the Acting Director of the school, but resigned the following spring so he could freely fight decisions being made that he felt would be detrimental to the school. (These issues may have been related to a proposal to close the school or to combine it with others.)" Shortly after returning to the school as an instructor in the fall of 1944, POP became ill and passed away in March 1945.

After his military service, **Willard F. Rockwell** '05 consolidated many of his multiple companies to form the Rockwell Manufacturing Company. In demand as a speaker and author, he established a reputation as a critic of governmental bureaucracy and a champion of the competitive free-enterprise system.

Thomas Wallace '29 received his PhD in Physics from Boston University in 1940. He later taught physics at Northeastern University for many years to engineering students like me .

Chapter 8 - The 1950s

This decade, warmed by a few rays of hope, but mostly raked by the cold winds of despair, would be the beginning of the end for Boston Technical High School in the Back Bay.

Notes from school committee meetings in 1953 indicate that Boston Tech, short on space again, would open an annex in September 1953 in the High School of Commerce building on Avenue Louis Pasteur. However, the Tech Annex would actually be established in the Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School building, just off Washington St., near Egleston Square. This switch of annex sites probably resulted from the closure of Commerce High in 1954 and the relocation of English High to the Avenue Louis Pasteur building. While the Tech annex was in operation, sophomores spent half a year at the main building, working in the Forge Shop as well as on academic subjects, and half a year at the annex taking a purely academic course load.



Henry P. Moore earned a PhD in history from Boston College in 1939. Known as "Doc" by his students, he taught history at the Tech Annex. A very eccentric teacher, he had written his doctoral dissertation on the Battle of Jutland, one of World War I's major naval engagements. His students knew, as Karl Bossi '56 relates in his fascinating book *Just Call Me Moose: Growing Up Italian in America*, that a mere mention of the battle would often be enough to sidetrack Doc from delivering a "deluge of new, testable material. ... All it took was the right question."

"Sir, how many ships got sunk?"

"Another kid yelled, 'Is this gonna be on the final?'"

"For the remainder of the period, Doc related once more all the details of the horrific wartime confrontation, oblivious to the boys winking and smirking at one another."



Battles of a different kind raged throughout the 1950s over the issue of Technical's future home.

Walter E. Mutz, president of the Boston Technical High School Alumni Association, wrote to Joseph G. White, chairman of the Boston School Committee in April 1950 regarding the need for a new school. Mr. White replied, "I want to assure you and the members of the Boston Technical High School Alumni Association that when any appropriation for new high school buildings is made by the School Committee your petition will be given every consideration. ... We are not unmindful of the antiquated building occupied by the students of Boston Technical High School."

In May 1950, school committee secretary Louise Kane wrote to Mr. Mutz, "your recent communication ... was presented and placed on file for consideration at the time that new building construction is under discussion." It appears that both of these responses meant little more than 'Don't call us; we'll call you.'

Walter Mutz duly informed Headmaster Durnan by letter in June 1950 of his communication with the school committee. In his letter, he also included a very cryptic passage, "Upon my return from Europe yesterday I was pleased to find a letter from our mutual friend Mr. Perkins advising me that my resignation as President of the B.T.H.S. had been accepted. I hope that this action will result in the rejuvenation of the Alumni Association. Anything that I can do to assist you in your work at the school will be considered a pleasure on my part."

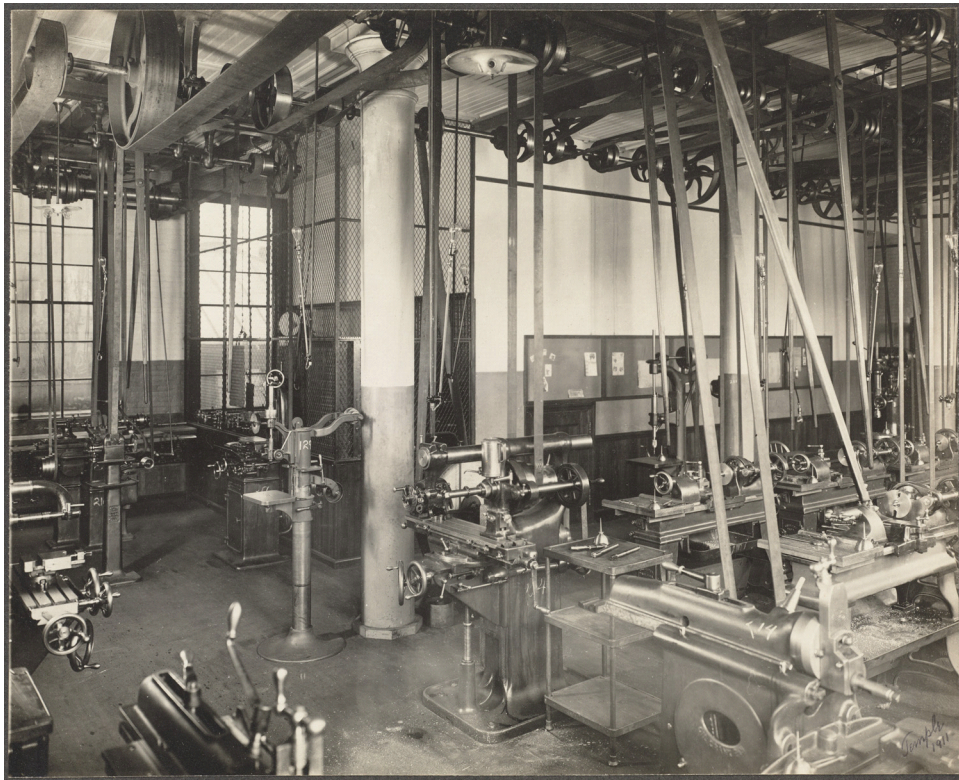
Mutz's letter raises some interesting questions. If he was pleased to have his resignation accepted, why was he continuing to volunteer his help? Who was spearheading the rejuvenation of the association? And, in light of his clearly impending resignation, why had he written to the school committee in the first place?

The battle over the future home of Boston Tech really heated up in 1957 and 1958.

The 1957 annual report of the school superintendent stated "In 1956 and 1957 preparation of architectural plans were in process or completed for the following units: New Boston Technical High School, Roxbury, capacity 1500." It's not recorded if these plans were for an entirely new building and what site was being considered.

In November 1957, the *Boston Traveler* published an article advocating a new building. Some of its key points were:

- One lathe that was built by MAHS students before the USS *Maine* was sunk in 1898 is still in use;
- BTHS teachers must manufacture parts in order to maintain some equipment that was installed when the building first opened;
- 1000 boys have been refused admission in the past five years;
- Tech is the only public school in the city without a gym and a physical education program;
- The machine shop is a maze of overhead pulley-driven belts;



A maze of overhead pulley-driven belts

- All but 200 pupils eat their lunches in classrooms;
- It's not a trade or vocational school;
- A 1925 letter from the school committee indicated it was in sympathy for a new school and hoped to provide suitable and adequate accommodations "at no distant date;"
- John P. McMorrow, chairman of the 1957 school committee, and other committeemen, had been pushing for a new school, estimated to cost \$5M; and

- Headmaster Durnan added “You do the best with what you have. ... We think we’ve done pretty well. ... But I still maintain that tin can science produces tin can results”.

The *Boston Herald* took the opposing view. In a March 1958 editorial it stated that, even though it would be nice to build a new school for Boston Technical, the city was in serious financial trouble and simply could not afford it. It also made the point that the Roxbury Memorial building would make an excellent new home for Tech since it had ample space for classrooms and shops, was centrally located, and was relatively new (its two buildings were built in 1927 and 1929). It urged the school committee to say “no” to a new Boston Tech and accept a compromise solution to the problem.

Another *Boston Herald* editorial two days later repeated the same message. It called the school committee’s hesitation over the decision “surprising”, considering the city’s bad financial shape. Spending \$6M to \$7M for a new Tech building would, the paper felt, plunge the city into even deeper money troubles. Roxbury Memorial was no longer needed; its remaining students could easily be absorbed into other schools. And with the availability of its building, there was “no need whatsoever to build now for Technical High.”

In April 1958, the *Boston Globe* reported that the school committee had voted to reject construction of a new Boston Tech building, estimated to cost \$6M. It also voted to admit no freshmen to Roxbury Memorial in September, to transfer its remaining students (boys to the Theodore Roosevelt School, Tech’s annex, and girls to an undecided location), and to renovate the Roxbury Memorial building for BTHS at a cost of \$1.5M. 1958 school committee chairman, George F. Hurley, declared that a new Boston Technical building was necessary. Former committee chairman, John P. McMorro, now led the campaign for Tech’s transfer. Two of the five committee members had sought to delay a vote until after hearing from alumni, administrators, and parents of both Boston Tech and Roxbury Memorial students, but that did not occur.

However, the vote to transfer Boston Tech did not settle the issue. Public hearings were held in June 1958 to allow opponents of the plan to speak. Two main factions presented their views – one group which didn’t want Roxbury Memorial to close and another group which wanted a new building for Tech.

Walter Durnan, speaking for the latter group, noted that the Roxbury school was entirely too big for Technical’s purposes, it was poorly located with respect to transportation, it would require extensive structural changes, and it was not close to athletic facilities. Taking a page from Charles W. Parmenter’s play book, Mr. Durnan presented an alternative plan at the public hearing. He proposed that the Theodore Roosevelt School building be enlarged, at an estimated cost of \$2.85M, to meet his school’s needs and that Tech stay in its Back Bay building until the Egleston Sq. building was ready.

A *Boston Globe* editorial published immediately after the hearings stated that there were plans to transform Boston Technical into a selective science high school, a la New York City’s Bronx High School of Science. It said that Mr. Durnan did not believe the Roxbury Memorial building could be renovated into a satisfactory facility for that type of school. It also reported the headmaster’s skepticism of the committee’s cost estimates for the proposed remodeling of

Roxbury Memorial's building. The *Globe's* overall message was that, before the school committee implemented its order, it should satisfy the public that the move of Tech to Memorial was the most practical solution to the problem.

Just a few days after Mr. Durnan made his proposal at the public hearing, School Superintendent Dennis C. Haley sent a memorandum to John P. McMorrow in which he gave his reasons for rejecting the enlargement of the Roosevelt School. Haley felt the assembly hall was too small, it had an inadequate gymnasium, and it would cost too much to acquire adjacent land. He also claimed that the Roosevelt site had been looked at as a possible future home for Technical over a year before and the idea had been rejected.

Other opinions surfaced. **Lester S. Perkins** '06, secretary of the MAHS Alumni Association was quoted in the *Boston Sunday Globe* as favoring a brand new school at a site in Dorchester. He said, "That's what we old graduates want – a new school from top to bottom". Since Mr. Perkins also stated that the organization represented graduates from 1893-1943, I wonder if some members of the old MAHS association had not fully accepted the transition of their school to Boston Technical High School. Were there more than one alumni associations at this time?

At almost the same time **John P. Grayken**, Secretary-Treasurer of the MAHS-BTHS Alumni Association - was this a different association than Lester Perkins' group? - wrote a letter to the editor of the *Boston Globe* in which he recommended reconsideration of the school committee's vote to transfer Tech. He questioned how moving 1200 Technical students into a vacated Roxbury Memorial building (with a capacity of 3500 students) would solve the issue of overcapacity. He also stated his belief that a new Technical could be built for \$3M, the expense of which could be partially offset by the \$1.8M not required for renovations at Roxbury Memorial. And, he noted, the old Technical building was located on very valuable land; its sale price could also be applied to the cost of a new building. Thus, he felt that a new Boston Technical could be provided at very little additional expense to the city.

But the school committee's decision stood. Boston Technical High School would move from Belvidere and Dalton Sts. in the Back Bay to Townsend St. in Roxbury.

Two weeks after the public hearing, Mr. Durnan submitted his retirement papers. The *Boston Globe* reported that, at age 64, six years short of the compulsory retirement age, he'd submitted his retirement request in protest over the school committee's decision to transfer Tech to Roxbury Memorial. The school committee insisted, however, that Headmaster Durnan's retirement request was "not connected in any way with the dispute over the transfer of Technical High to Roxbury." It also said that he'd made his intentions to retire made known one year before. Mr. Durnan retired at 65% of his (maximum for headmasters) salary of \$9,424.

Walter T. Durnan's contributions to this long-running battle can perhaps best be summarized by a well-known Bible verse:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)



Roger Connor, math teacher and later head of the department, recalls the time in the mid-1950s when he ran afoul of an important school rule. One day, in between teaching periods, even though teachers were not supposed to leave the building during school hours, Roger persuaded fellow teacher Bill Durante to accompany him to a local coffee shop to buy cigarettes. When they returned, they were informed that the headmaster, Walter T. Durnan, wanted to see them. Mr. Durnan - Roger says that's how teachers always referred to him - said, "I understand you two were out of the building." Admitting he had, Mr. Connor added, "I needed to buy cigarettes and asked Mr. Durante to go along with me." "Why did you need cigarettes?" asked Mr. Durnan; "You know there's no smoking in the triangle!" Roger explained that some of the teachers smoked in the boiler room. Mr. Durnan quickly ended the conversation with, "I never go down there."

Since the Tech building had no teacher's lounge, the younger teachers tended to use the boiler room as a lounge - smoking and playing cribbage there. It was in that environment that Roger Connor got to know another young teacher, John D. O'Bryant. An English High alumnus, Mr. O'Bryant had come to Boston Tech as a health teacher at about the same time that Roger Connor joined the faculty. John O'Bryant looked so young that some students thought he was one of them and not a teacher. He would leave his mark on the school and its students.

Mr. O'Bryant established a new student activity, the Drill Team, in 1956. At the time, members of the team did not realize that an MAHS Trick Squad had existed in the 1930s. Lacking a large area, like a "large, well appointed gymnasium" in which to practice, the team was forced to learn its marching and rifle maneuvers on the assembly hall stage. The stage was so small that the team had to march at a half step, i.e., take half-sized steps. The team gave its first official performance in November 1956 at an alumni 'smoker' and reception for the football team at New England Mutual Hall. Mr. O'Bryant continued to lead the drill team into the 1960s.



Some students excelled at sports; others excelled at academics. Following are two report cards of a Franklin Medal winner from the early 1950s.

Read the other side of this card	OCT.	DEC.	FEB.	APRIL	JUNE	YEAR
Days Absent		14	1	2		
Times Tardy		1	2	1		
Applied Mathematics						
Algebra						
Solid Geometry	B	B	B	A	A	A
Plane Geometry						A
Trigonometry						
Aeronautics						
Surveying						
English	A	B	A	A	A	A
French	B	B	B	B	A	B
German, Spanish	A	A	A	A	A	A
Science, Biology						
Physics-Chemistry	A	A	A	A	A	A
El. Engineering						
Adv. Lab'y						
History, Civics or Economics						
Shop						
Shop						
D'rw'g	A	B	A	A	A	A
Health Education	B	B	B	B	B	B
Military Science	B	A	A	B	A	A

PUPIL'S NAME: *[Redacted]* BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOSTON TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

REPORT CARD

CLASS: IV, X GROUP: B

LOW MARKS show that more home study is needed. (one) The signature of the HEAD OF THE FAMILY is requested as an indication that this report has been received and read at home.

[Signatures]

Read the other side of this card	OCT.	DEC.	FEB.	APRIL	JUNE	YEAR
Days Absent		5	1	4	1	11
Times Tardy	3	1	1			5
Applied Mathematics						
Algebra						
Solid Geometry			A	A		A
Plane Geometry	A	A	A			A
Trigonometry						
Aeronautics						
Surveying						
English	B	B	B	B		B
French	B	B	B	B		B
German, Spanish	A	B	B	B		B
Science, Biology						
Physics-Chemistry	B	B	A	B		B
El. Engineering						
Adv. Lab'y						
History, Civics or Economics						
Shop	B	A	B	B		B
Shop						
D'rw'g	A	B	A	A		A
Health Education	A	B	C	A		B
Military Science	A	A	A	A		A

PUPIL'S NAME: *[Redacted]* BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOSTON TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

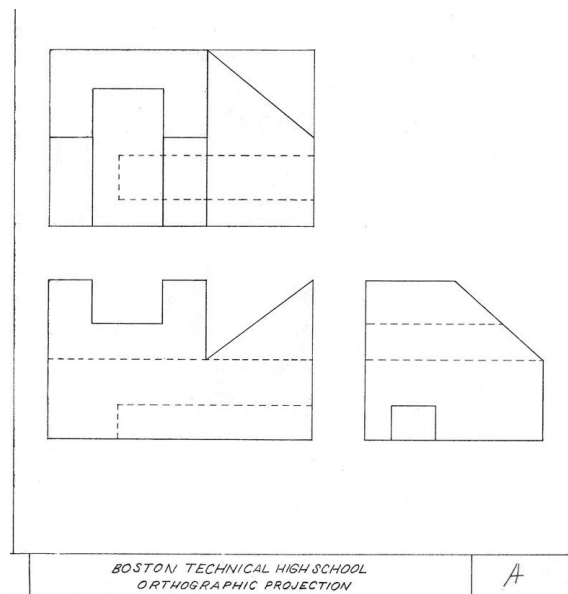
REPORT CARD

CLASS: IV, X GROUP: B

LOW MARKS show that more home study is needed. (one) The signature of the HEAD OF THE FAMILY is requested as an indication that this report has been received and read at home.

[Signatures]

The following paper shows a typical drafting assignment for a senior at Boston Tech in the 1950s. Considering the grade it received, perhaps it was done by a Franklin Medal winner.



In January 1953, Ralph DeLeo '53, captain of the Boston Tech hockey team, scored 11 goals in one game against Roxbury Memorial High School. DeLeo, of East Boston, scored six of his goals unassisted. This feat made the papers, even attracting the attention of Boston Bruin players Ed Sanford and Hal Laycoe, both of whom remarked that they'd never heard of anything like it before. I learned recently from a player on that Roxbury Memorial team that this game was the Memorial goalie's first game!

Boston Tech played its first ever Thanksgiving Day football game in 1956 at White Stadium in Franklin Park. Jack Nee '57 made a beautiful catch, pictured below, for a second quarter touchdown in Tech's 14-6 win over rival Boston Trade High School. In another game at the stadium that morning, one of Jack's friends, future Boston mayor Ray Flynn quarterbacked South Boston High School as they were upset by East Boston.



Jack Nee '57 catches pass in 14-6 win over Boston Trade in 1956

Dr. Nathaniel J. Hasenfus, head of the English Department, left Boston Technical High School in 1958 to become the academic dean at Chamberlayne Junior College. In addition to his teaching duties, he'd also been the yearbook advisor since 1941.

Everett J. Conway became Walter T. Durnan's successor in October 1958. According to school committee meeting records, some members questioned his qualifications for the job. Mr. Conway was not a technical person - i.e., had not been educated in mathematics or in an engineering discipline - whereas another man in competition for the job did have such training. However, it was argued by one committee member, former Tech headmaster D. Leo Daley, who was considered to have performed the job successfully, had an educational background in history. This point settled the issue; Mr. Conway was selected. [A story passed down in the Conway family, and related by his son "Mario", paints a picture of an *exceptionally* political headmaster selection process in operation at that time within the Boston school system. Mario's story goes on

to say that his father's cause was also helped by the political connections of an old Forest Hills friend of Mrs. Conway's family.]

Alumni Notes for the 1950s

Gen. Breen's son Pvt. **Richard J. Breen** '53 was killed in an accident while serving with the US Army in Germany in 1956.

Waldo C. Hasenfus '00, pastor of St. Matthew's Church in Dorchester, was elevated to the rank of Right Reverend Monsignor in February 1954.

Dr. **John Hrones** '30, co-authored a textbook, "Analysis of the four-bar linkage: its application to the synthesis of mechanisms," in 1951. He also helped to create the DEW (Distant Early Warning) Line, a radar system established in northern Canada to detect Soviet bombers. Dr. Hrones left MIT in 1957, when he was appointed Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Case Institute of Technology in Cleveland.



George Keegan '51 and friends

George Keegan - pictured above with his Tech friends **Bob Giuliana**, **Gus Bosio**, **Elmer Delvental**, **Harry Kempt**, and **Andrew Kapravy** - had been a junior in Boston Tech's Class of 1951 for only two months when he contracted polio. As his classmate **Robert J. Guiliana** wrote in the June 1951 issue of the *Artisan*, "After a year and a half of courageous work George has regained the partial use of his arms and one leg. ... If a refreshing personality and dogged perseverance mean success, George Keegan will overcome his handicap and go on to become a man to be respected." Robert was right. In addition to receiving therapy and taking normal high school subjects, George learned to be a watchmaker at the Massachusetts Hospital School in Canton. In 1951, founded Keegan's Jewelers in Norwood, which his sons still operate today.

One Boston Tech graduate became a figure skater. **Ronald Ludington** '52, of Roxbury, and his wife won the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in pairs skating four times from 1957 to 1960, and bronze medals at the 1959 World Figure Skating Championships and the 1960

Olympics games in Colorado Springs. Ludington was named to the Ice Skating Hall of Fame in 1993, the World Ice Skating Hall of Fame in 1999, and the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame in 2000. He coached many award-winning skaters and headed the University of Delaware's Ice Skating Science Development Center for 23 years.

Following World War II, **John B. Roach** '43 continued to fly with the US Air Force Reserve and earned a degree in industrial engineering from Boston University.

In May 1952, **Willard F. Rockwell** '05 returned to Boston to address the MAHS-BTHS alumni association. Beginning by noting that he had been surprised to learn of the school's new name, he used this as the springboard to speak on a number of changes that had occurred since "our time." He spoke against the evils of Communism, in favor of the "republic" form of government, and against the "democracy" form, making it clear that he used both terms in a sense "that has no reference to either the Democratic or Republican party". In addition, he emphasized that he was opposed to "big government" and strongly favored a free market economy.

Rockwell formed Rockwell-Standard Corporation in 1953 by further mergers of his various companies. He also continued to serve his country, by traveling to Europe for the Mutual Security Agency and as a special aide to the Secretary of Defense, specializing in offshore procurement and inspecting foreign plants for NATO.

Daniel J. Sullivan '57, thinking that he would probably join the Navy after high school, as his brother **John Sullivan** '54 had done, did not take the college course at Boston Tech. But in his senior year, Dan, an outstanding athlete in football, hockey, and baseball, received offers to attend a number of colleges. Mike Holovak, head football coach at Boston College, suggested that Dan attend a preparatory school to improve his English SAT scores; his mathematics scores had been fine. However, John Morris, Tech's football coach, had a different idea. He suggested that Dan attend a one-year postgraduate program at Boston Latin School, which Dan did. So, for the next year, he took Latin, English, and history courses; he was not allowed to participate in sports. Dan received a Boston Latin School diploma and is considered a member of their Class of 1958.

Chapter 9 - The 1960s and Beyond The Triangle

The Class of 1960 was the last class to graduate from the old school. In the summer of 1960 Boston Technical High School relocated to Townsend St. in Roxbury, site of the former Roxbury Memorial High School.

Alterations to Technical's new home began in December 1959. The building was renovated to provide 46 classrooms, eight laboratories, an art room, three music and band rooms, five drafting rooms, 19 miscellaneous shops, two demonstration rooms, two audio-visual rooms and a language laboratory. In addition it featured a newly constructed cafeteria, new lighting, a new intercom system, a new fire alarm system, and newly refinished floors and furniture. Extensive structural changes were required to support the heavy shop loads. The Welding Department of Boston Trade High School fabricated and welded 20 new anvil bases for Tech's new building. The superintendent later reported that \$1.98M was spent for the "major remodeling and modernization" of the new Boston Tech.

Except for a brief period in the late 1920s, when the ground floor beneath its sheet metal shop was set up as a gym (before becoming a drill hall), the school had never had a gymnasium. Certainly it never had a "large, well appointed" one. But, Roxbury Memorial had had separate gyms for boys and girls. So, with the 1960 move, Tech became a school with two gymnasiums! One gym had an electric scoreboard and was well suited for basketball; the second was equipped with an overhead track. Finally, in this respect at least, Tech was living large.

When first built, in fact, the Roxbury Memorial building even had a real swimming pool - unlike MAHS/Tech's mythical sixth-floor swimming pool.

The physical act of moving Technical beyond the "triangle" was a massive undertaking that required considerable planning, coordination, and plain hard work. Both teachers and students were involved in packing and marking boxes for shipment, which saved considerable money. In 1961, Headmaster Conway wrote an excellent and very readable description of the relocation process for the school superintendent's annual report. I have included it in Appendix C.

Some machine tools for the new school were purchased from government surplus, saving \$40,000. Other machine tools were removed from the old Tech building and reinstalled in five junior high school shops around the city to upgrade those facilities.

More than 1600 students applied for admission to the new Boston Tech.

No longer needed, the Technical High School Annex in the Theodore Roosevelt school building was ordered closed in July 1960.

In March 1960, Mechanic Arts' Class of 1940 held its 20th reunion. Guests of honor included Headmaster Conway; former coach James Holland; former teachers Arthur Racine and S. Walter Hoyt; and former MAHS football star and college All-American John Yonaker '40.

Boston Tech's last schoolboy parade was held in May 1960. Lack of funding, lack of interest and increasing public hostility toward all things military because of the Vietnam War led to the gradual demise of military drill in Boston's high schools. It was eliminated entirely in 1965. However, certain military-related activities, like the drill team and the band, were retained at Boston Technical for a number of years.



Gen. Breen keeps the Boston Tech troops looking sharp



After a schoolboy parade, the troops head back to the drill hall

A number of changes to the teaching staff occurred at the time of the Roxbury move.

General Peter V. Breen retired in June 1960.

Mr. Harry M. Webster retired in June 1960.

Mr. Andrew G. Lofgren '29 retired in October 1960.

French language teacher Mr. Emmet T. Morrill was promoted to head of department at Boston Latin School in September 1960.

In 1961 six Boston Technical teachers were selected to receive grants for summer university study – Roger Connor (Catholic University), Edward A. Foley (Tufts University), Allan Furber (Tufts University), John Gray (Johns Hopkins University), Henry F. Mulloy (Tufts University), and Frank Santosuosso (Tufts University).

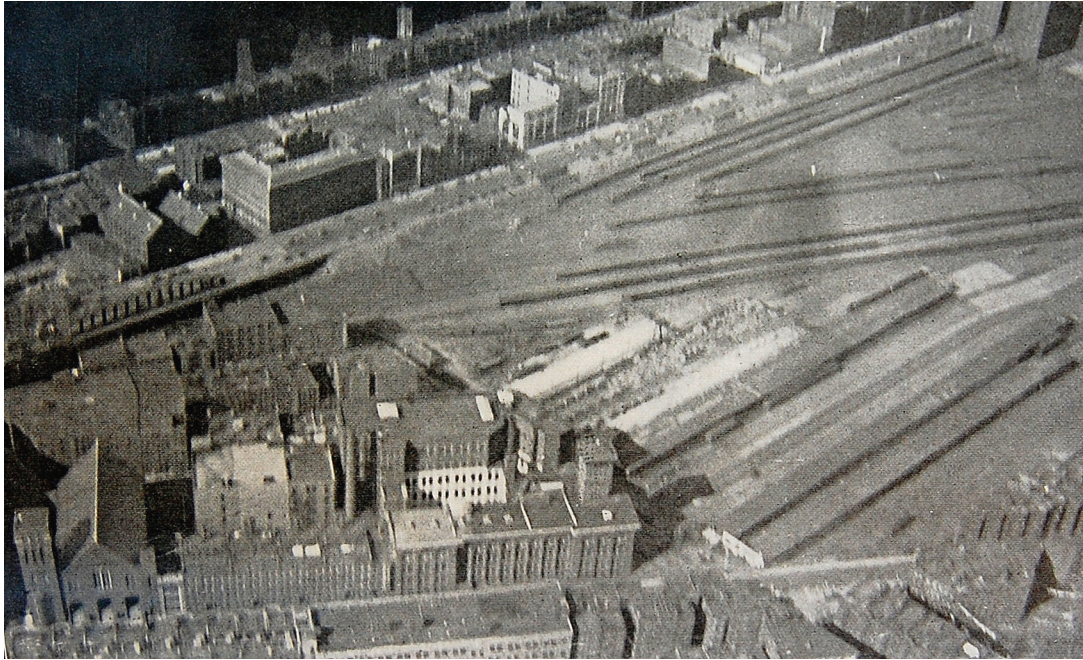
Just one week after the death of former Boston Tech football coach John Morris, mathematics department head James H. Holland died suddenly in July 1962, at age 64. School committee member Mr. Joseph Lee made the following statement after his death, "I think we have a great loss to the School system in the passing of Mr. Holland."

Mr. Roger T. Connor was promoted to head of the mathematics department, succeeding Mr. Holland, in September 1962.

Math teacher James W. Dailey was appointed as Data Processing Manager of the Boston School Department, effective September 1963.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority's 1961 report, "ESTIMATE OF PHYSICAL CHANGES ON THE PRUDENTIAL SITE AND IN SURROUNDING BLOCKS OCCURRING SINCE 1955 " lists a number of uses that were lost since 1955 due to demolition or conversion. At the bottom, below apartment buildings, gas stations, clubs, warehouses, and retail stores is:

"1 tech. high school (vacant but not yet razed)"



Aerial View of Boston Technical High School

The tired old building at the corner of Belvidere and Dalton Sts., which had seen well over 14,000 boys graduate in its 67 years as the home of Mechanic Arts High School and Boston Technical High School, was demolished in 1963.



Number of Graduates per Year, 1896-1960

Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#	Year	#
		1900	115	1910	136	1920	74	1930	243	1940	279	1950	259	1960	?
		1901	118	1911	162	1921	122	1931	207	1941	343	1951	242		
		1902	130	1912	215	1922	133	1932	248	1942	317	1952	220		
1893	0	1903	136	1913	197	1923	184	1933	256	1943	366	1953	?		
1894	0	1904	169	1914	172	1924	232	1934	311	1944	313	1954	?		
1895	0	1905	183	1915	201	1925	217	1935	277	1945	354	1955	?		
1896	55	1906	209	1916	190	1926	218	1936	228	1946	334	1956	313*		
1897	25	1907	210	1917	215	1927	235	1937	252	1947	292	1957	338		
1898	28	1908	230	1918	113	1928	186	1938	242	1948	351	1958	267		
1899	75	1909	67	1919	99	1929	247	1939	249	1949	313	1959	281		

* Estimated

Alumni Notes for the 1960s and Beyond

James T. Amsler ca.'39 held back-to-back college presidencies - at North Adams State College (now the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts) from 1968 until 1979 and Salem State College (now University) from 1979 to 1988. A 1942 graduate of Fitchburg State College, he began his career as a junior high school teacher. During World War II he was a naval intelligence officer; after the war he continued to serve in the Naval Reserve, retiring as a Captain. Amsler earned a master's degree from Harvard and a doctorate in education from Boston University. Before becoming president at North Adams, Dr. Amsler served at Salem State in various teaching and administrative positions for many years.

In October 1960 an Eastern Airlines Lockheed Electra airliner flew into a flock of starlings on takeoff from Logan Airport and crashed into Boston Harbor. Sixty two of the 72 passengers aboard were killed, including 12 newly enlisted Marines who were traveling to Parris Island, South Carolina for recruit training. Following radio appeals for help in search, rescue and recovery operations at the crash site, hundreds of volunteers rushed to the airport and surrounding locations. Among them were Boston Tech alumni **Jim Arangio** '57, and **Peter Bishop** '57.

Peter Bishop remembers "when the announcement on the radio came on stating that an aircraft had crashed into Boston Harbor, and [more importantly] all skin divers are asked to come to the scene and help out." He, his brother and some friends gathered their scuba gear and immediately responded. "Somehow, we ended up on the *White Heath*, a Coast Guard buoy tender," Peter recalled later. "We pulled in several seats, but that was all. We never got into the water."

From his family's home high on a hill in East Boston, Jim Arangio could see all the activity at the airport. He and his older brother Joe made it to the crash site in just a few minutes. (Years later, Joe Arangio would become headmaster of Boston Technical High School, serving at the time when the school first admitted young women as students.) Jim remembered his first impression of the crash as being, "kind of spooky because there was no substantial wreckage floating in the water except for several dual aircraft seats that were all turned over and a few pleasure craft and small boats that were trying to round them up. Once a boat latched on to a seat it headed to shore where we and other volunteers pulled it on the beach and turned it over. Most of the seats were empty although we turned one over that had two young men strapped in. I assumed these were a couple of Marine recruits."

Ironically, one of the young Marines killed that day was **Harvey Gorewitz** '60, of Dorchester, a member of the last class to graduate from the old Boston Technical High School building. He and his fellow Marines who died that day were honored by the Marine Corps by being buried in dress blue uniforms.

After serving as a helicopter crew chief with the US Marine Corps reserves, Dorchester's **Richard J. Egan** '53 earned a BS in Electrical Engineering from Northeastern University in 1961. He was awarded a master's degree from MIT and later worked there on NASA's Project Apollo. In 1979, Egan co-founded EMC Corporation and held the positions of president, CEO, and chairman of the board at the company. EMC eventually became Massachusetts' largest technology company. He was a major financial supporter of Northeastern and served as the leader of numerous educational, business and technology groups. Richard Egan was the United States Ambassador to Ireland from August 2001 to December 2002.

Albert F. Hegenberger '13 was enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame in 1976 for his many pioneering achievements in aviation.

John Roach '43 worked for the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA) from 1969 until 1983. Beginning as chief inspector of air carrier operations at Logan Airport, by the time of his retirement he had become the deputy regional director for the New England region, in which position he was responsible for the FAA towers and offices throughout that area.

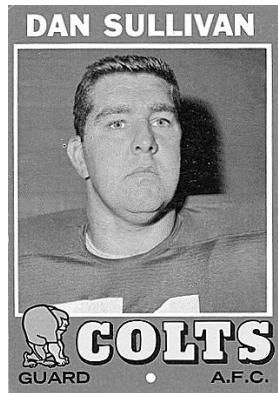
John flew fighter and transport aircraft for the US Air Force Reserve, and retired as a colonel in 1985. During his career, he was qualified to fly 45 types of civilian and military aircraft. Plus, he held airframe mechanic, powerplant mechanic and flight engineer licenses. He certainly achieved what he had hoped for as a boy - "Somehow I'm going to fly airplanes." In retirement, John Roach was active in various aviation clubs and with the Tuskegee Airmen organization.

Willard F. Rockwell '05 must have been related to the "Energizer Bunny". As late as July 1960, he was issued a patent - for inventing an "Emergency Brake for Heavy Duty Trucks." The Automotive Hall of Fame honored him with both its Induction Award, which it calls "the single greatest honor in the automotive business", and its Distinguished Service Award, which "recognizes an individual who has significantly improved the industry..." In 1991, the colonel was also inducted into the US Army Ordnance Corps Hall of Fame for his many achievements. Some of these included helping to develop "standard mobile equipment for the Army,

particularly military truck axles and five-ton rear axle drives" during World War I and for helping design the 2-1/2 ton general purpose truck with four wheel drive (described by the Corps on its web site as "one of the six secret weapons which had won the war") during World War II.

His 1964 book, *"The Rebellious Colonel Speaks: The selected Papers of Willard F. Rockwell"* contains chapters titled: Our Vanishing Freedoms, Perversion in the Name of Reform, Big Government's Blunders and Excesses, The Backfire of Foreign Aid, Socialism's Fantasies and Failures, Let Us Return to Self-Help, and Inflation and Taxation - Twin Burdens.

Following high school - both of them! - **Dan Sullivan** '57 attended and played football at Boston College, where, as a senior in 1962, he received the Thomas F. Scanlan Award for outstanding scholarship, character, and football ability. In 1976, Dan Sullivan was inducted into the Boston College Varsity Club Athletic Hall. From 1962 to 1972, Dan wore #71 as an offensive lineman for the National Football League's Baltimore Colts, playing for them in Super Bowls III and V. He is the only Tech alumni I know of with a football card, shown below.



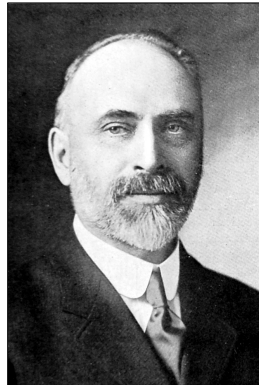
Appendix A - Headmaster Biographies

Frank Alpine Hill, 1893 - 1894



Frank A. Hill was born in Biddeford, ME in 1841. He earned an A.B. Degree from Bowdoin College, which also awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1894. He served as the principal of Limington Academy and Biddeford High School in Maine and the Milford, Chelsea, and Cambridge English high schools in Massachusetts before becoming the first headmaster of Mechanic Arts High School in 1893. Active in his private life as well, Hill was a member of the corporation of MIT and a trustee of Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. Following his service to MAHS, Dr. Hill held the position of secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education from 1894 until his death in 1903.

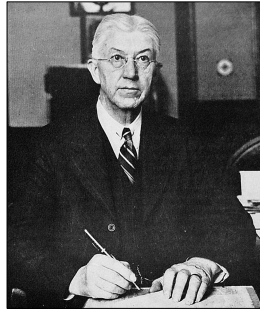
Charles Winfield Parmenter, 1894 - 1923



Born in Mt. Holly, VT in 1852, Charles W. Parmenter was an 1877 graduate of Tufts College, from which he also received the M.A. (1886) and PhD (1895) degrees. He served as secretary of the Board of overseers of his alma mater for five years. Charles Parmenter was a science teacher at several schools and was the principal of Waltham High School immediately before becoming the headmaster of Mechanic Arts High School in 1894. During his almost 30 years in this

position, Dr. Parmenter poured vast amounts of his time and energy into MAHS - first into bringing it to life, and then protecting it from opposing forces, oftentimes within the school system itself. Upon his retirement in 1923, he moved back to Vermont, where he died in 1940. Dr. Charles W. Parmenter, more than anyone else, deserves the title of "Mr. Mechanic Arts."

Adelbert H. Morrison, 1923 - 1944



Adelbert H. Morrison, a native of Merrimac, MA, was a classmate and lifelong friend of American poet Robert Frost. He graduated with an electrical engineering degree from Tufts College in 1894 and also studied at the University of Berlin. Before coming to Mechanic Arts in 1904 as an assistant instructor in science, he taught at schools in Spencer, Brookline and Lawrence, all in Massachusetts. At MAHS he taught French, physics, mechanical drawing, geometry, and algebra prior to becoming head of the science department in 1911. During World War I, Mr. Morrison took a leave of absence from the school to organize training centers for shipyard workers. He retired from Mechanic Arts High School in 1944 and moved to Winter Park, FL in 1950.

His wife, Helen, established a scholarship at Tufts University, The Adelbert H. Morrison Fund, in 1958 "for the benefit of needy and worthy students majoring in engineering, preferably graduates of Boston Technical High School already attending Tufts."

D. Leo Daley, 1944 - 1948



D. Leo Daley graduated from Boston College in 1916 and received a master's degree in 1927. Keenly interested in athletics throughout his life, Mr. Daley captained BC's football team in 1914, coached football at South Boston High School, Boston College High, Hyde Park High, and English High. He was also the head football coach at Boston College in 1927 and served as president of the Eastern Association of Inter-Collegiate Football Officials. In 1948, he was the umpire for the Cotton Bowl Classic.

Mr. Daley was head of the history department at Mechanic Arts from 1932 to 1935. Immediately before becoming Boston Technical's first headmaster in 1944, Mr. Daley led the history department at Boston English High School. Headmaster Daley left Boston Tech in 1948 when he was selected to be an assistant school superintendent. D. Leo Daley died in 1979 at the age of 84.

Walter T. Durnan, 1948 - 1958



Born in Arlington, MA, Walter T. Durnan was a 1917 graduate of Boston College and a veteran of World War I. Mr. Durnan taught at Dorchester High School and headed the science department at South Boston High School, before moving to Boston Technical in 1948. Walter Durnan was Tech's headmaster during one of its most tumultuous periods, the 1950s, when battles raged over the school's post-Back Bay home. After retiring in 1958, Walter Durnan lived in West Roxbury and Fairfax, VA, where he passed away at age 83 in 1980.

Everett J. Conway, 1958 - 1971



Born in Roxbury, MA in March 1901, Everett J. Conway graduated from Boston's High School of Commerce in 1918. After a year at Boston College, he joined the US Coast Guard. He transferred to Boston University following his military service and earned bachelor's and master's degrees there. Mr. Conway began his Boston teaching career as an English teacher at the J. H. Barnes Junior High School in 1928. He was appointed a junior master at the Roxbury Memorial High School for Girls in 1929 and was promoted to head of its English department in 1945. Mr. Conway transferred to Boston Latin School as head of its English department, remaining at that school until he was selected to become the headmaster of Boston Technical in 1958. He was Tech's headmaster in 1960, when the school moved from the Back Bay to Roxbury. In his 37 years as a teacher and headmaster, Everett Conway never missed a day of school until he contracted tuberculosis near the end of his career. After 13 years as Tech's headmaster, years that included a major relocation and major upheaval during the court-ordered Boston busing crisis, Mr. Conway retired in March 1971. He died in 1978, at age 77, at his summer home in Duxbury.

Appendix B - Notable Teacher Biographies

Peter Vincent Breen, aka Vincent Charles Breen, aka Vincent P. Breen (b.1891 - d.1967)



The man known to thousands of students simply as "General" Breen used multiple names during his life. (No, he was never in the Federal Witness Protection Program!) A native of Dorchester, he was born Peter Vincent Breen in September 1891, according to the 1900 US Federal Census. In census records for 1910-1940, his name is listed as Peter, though once it's written Peter B. and in 1930 it's even been transcribed as Peter Breesor!

Using the name Vincent Charles (his confirmation name) Breen, he enlisted in the National Guard in 1908 and served with its 9th Infantry Regiment in the Mexican Expedition of 1916. During World War I, as the commanding officer of Co C, 101st Infantry Regiment, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for conspicuous bravery in action during the Second Battle of the Marne, just two weeks before the Armistice. His award's citation reads:

"The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Captain (Infantry) Vincent C. Breen, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in action while serving with 101st Infantry Regiment, 26th Division, A.E.F., in the Bois Belleau north of Verdun, France, 27 October 1918. During the attack made to retake the woods lost by the retirement of our units, Captain Breen was severely wounded in the arm. After receiving first aid he again led his company forward through heavy fire until wounded a second time, this time in the shoulder. It was largely due to his courage and initiative that his company was able to advance to take its objective."

After 18 months of treatment in seven different army hospitals, he was honorably discharged in March 1920.

He began teaching at MAHS as its first, and only, military drill instructor, in 1927 as Maj. Peter V. Breen. At the request of Gov. Leverett Saltonstall, then Col. Breen helped reactivate the Massachusetts State Guard when the Massachusetts National Guard was federalized during World War II. Sometime during the war years, the general reverted to using the name Vincent C. Breen. According to his daughter Marilyn, the general's wife, Mary, convinced him that it would become increasingly confusing for him to be known under two names, so he worked with the federal government to change his records back to Peter V. Breen.

To complicate things even further, he was sometimes referred to as Vincent P. Breen. For instance, the 1958 yearbook, the *Technician*, was dedicated to him - and signed by him - using

that name. (Why? That piece of the mystery remains unsolved. Well, maybe he *was* in the Federal Witness Protection Program after all!)

Gen. Breen regularly played cribbage at lunchtime with Boston Tech custodian John Dole .

Three of Gen. Breen's sons; Vincent, Robert, and Richard, graduated from MAHS or Boston Tech. Among his family he was, and still is, referred to as "the General." Under that gruff exterior, however, his daughters knew him to be a real softie. But, the only person he never talked back to was his wife, Mary, whom he considered a "five star general."

Gen. Breen had no hobbies, so was not very active in retirement. Plus, suffering from emphysema later in life, he did not have a lot of energy. He remained in contact with many of his WWI buddies and would occasionally bring home one who'd fallen on hard times for a good meal and some socializing.

The general died in 1967, and is buried in St. Joseph's Cemetery in West Roxbury.

Dr. Nathaniel J. Hasenfus (b.1900 - d.1976)



Although Nathaniel Hasenfus, known respectfully by students as "Doc" Hasenfus, was not himself an alumnus of Mechanic Arts, he was the brother of one, Waldo Hasenfus '00. Dr. Hasenfus taught at English High School from 1922 until he transferred to the English department at MAHS in 1940. In the 1940s, he also served as the principal of the South Boston Evening High School. He was the faculty advisor to the staff of Boston Technical's yearbook, *The Technician*, from its first year of publication until he left the school to become academic dean at Chamberlain Junior College in 1958.

"Doc" was an extremely proud son of Boston College, from which he earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree and a PhD degree in English. He was also an eminent historian of Boston College Athletics and a former president of the BC Varsity Club. Each year, that club still presents The Nathaniel J. Hasenfus '22 Eagle of the Year Award to the outstanding male and female athletes in the graduating class who are outstanding citizens, leaders, scholars and athletes

He was also a great fan of the State of Maine and wrote, among other books, *We Summer in Maine* and *More Vacation Days in Maine*. Dr. Hasenfus passed away suddenly in November 1976 after giving a speech in Bath, Maine.

James H. "Dutch" Holland Jr. (b.1898 - d.1962)



James H. Holland Jr., a native of Charlestown, was a legendary teacher and coach, having a career at Mechanic Arts and Boston Tech that spanned forty years. After high school, where he had much success as a basketball player, Mr. Holland attended the United States Military Academy. He graduated from Boston College in 1920, earned an A.M. degree there in 1921 and received a Master of Education degree from The Teacher's College of the City of Boston in 1939. He started teaching mathematics at Mechanic Arts in 1921 and was promoted to head of the mathematics department in 1949, a position which he retained until his death, in 1962.

First appointed a "teacher coach" in 1926, Mr. Holland coached most all sports at MAHS until he entered the US Army Air Corps in 1942. In his obituary, the *Boston Globe* noted that his job of training a large track team was made very challenging at times by the school's lack of a gym. At times, his runners practiced in the corridors, in the assembly hall and on Belvidere and Dalton Sts.

"Dutchie" was an all-too-familiar face to students within the "Triangle". He regularly patrolled area coffee shops before and after school looking for students who were smoking. He also performed checks of the Massachusetts Avenue MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) bus station to ensure that students were carrying books home to study.

James Holland served on the Winthrop School Committee for many years. After his death, at age 64, a bronze plaque was attached to the outside of the Winthrop High School gym in honor of his years of service to the people and students of Winthrop.

John D. O'Bryant (b.1931 - d.1992)



John D. O'Bryant, an alumnus of Boston English High School, grew up in Boston's South End. Following service in the US Army, he attended Boston University, from which he would earn both bachelor's and master's degrees. He began his teaching career as a health teacher and guidance counselor at Boston Technical High School in 1955. In addition to his academic duties, Mr. O'Bryant also served as an assistant football coach and an advisor to the Drill Team, an activity which he started in 1956.

After leaving the Boston public schools in 1969, John O'Bryant became the director of health vocational training at the Dimock Community Health Center. In 1977, he was elected to a seat on the Boston School Committee, becoming the first black member of that body since 1899. In 1981, he began the first of his two terms as the committee's president, serving until state law mandated replacement of an elected school committee with one appointed by the mayor. Mr. O'Bryant was a strong opponent of this change and blamed Boston Mayor Ray Flynn for bringing it about.

Mr. O'Bryant was named Associate Dean of University Administration for Northeastern University in 1978 and Northeastern's Vice President of Student Affairs in 1979. The first African American to be appointed a vice president at that school, he held the post until his death, in 1992. In 1993, the university renamed its African-American Institute the John D. O'Bryant African-American Institute in his honor.

On learning of his death, Mayor Flynn said, "John O'Bryant served the city of Boston well, especially through his dedication to our public school children. I have known John O'Bryant for 35 years, since the earliest days playing neighborhood pickup basketball games, as well as through his advocating for the school kids of our city. We will miss this exceptional son of Boston."

In 1992, the Boston Technical High School was renamed the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science to honor his memory.

He was viewed by his Technical students, a vast majority of whom were white and had never before had a black teacher, as a really good man. One member of the Class of 1963 later wrote, "He was one of the finest men to ever cross my path. He was also the first black man to teach me the meaning of respect for all men." At recent 50th class reunions, his former students still remember Mr. John D. O'Bryant very fondly and continue to express great affection and admiration for him.

Appendix C - A Report on Boston Technical High School

by Everett J. Conway, Head Master

PART I

Boston Technical High School has machine, woodworking, electrical, hot and cold metal shops. These contain many large, expensive, and delicate precision machines for weighing, measuring, cutting, and planing wood and steel. There are also thousands of different tools with which students must become familiar and which they must learn to use when performing their many projects. In addition, a technical school, like ours, which strongly emphasizes mathematics and science, as well as mechanical drawing (the language of technocracy and engineering), must have well-equipped and generously stocked biology, physics, and chemistry laboratories, and drafting rooms with the latest and most up-to-date drawing teaching materials.

In the light of the above it is clear that *moving* all the equipment of such a school to a new site is a project the magnitude of which is staggering. For example, over a half a million dollars worth of tools had to be carefully inventoried, definitely marked, and packed safely in numberless boxes of the requisite size, shape, and capacity. Accurate records, in quadruplicate, had to be kept, the packed boxes stored in a place convenient for pickup, and the specific delivery location pinpointed by floor and room in the new site.

Without intelligent and efficient planning, requiring the willing and patient cooperation of department heads and their respective stuffs, even a beginning would have seemed almost insurmountable. One must remember that the ship must be kept moving even though the engines are undergoing repair.

Department heads had to plan their curricula carefully during the moving year to make certain that no essential instruction was omitted, even though, concurrently with teaching in the shops, tools and machines gradually had to be dismantled, and boxes reshaped to requisite size, and tools packed in them.

The prime need in such a complex project was a leader — a planner or coordinator especially selected to deal exclusively with the project. The Board of Superintendents were foreseeing and happy in the choice of Mr. James H. Holland, to be designated to master mind the whole business. Many long and fruitful meetings were arranged by Mr. Holland with the department heads, at which times each was directed to draw up a plan for his own department. Many consultations were held with the architect of the new school. At these long meetings all problems of size of shops, location of machines, tool cribs, and general layout were exhaustively debated until agreements satisfactory to each department were reached. Frequent apparent impasses were diplomatically settled with Mr. Roche when the department heads were convinced that budgetary limitations, over which neither Mr. Roche nor the Board of Superintendents had any control, prevented purchasing all types of equipment that the shop heads deemed essential.

In the light of the tight budget under which the School Committee was forced to operate, the obtaining of a tremendous number of suitable boxes was achieved in a fortunate manner through the help of Mr. William Mistler, whose brother, a superintendent of a warehouse, gave us gratis

our first desperately needed consignment of boxes. Our ingenious shop men organized our Technical Course boys, who, under their able directions, cut the boxes (on power machines) to the various sizes needed. Thousands of rebuilt boxes (hundreds and hundreds were bought secondhand from various warehouses) were thus made ready for the arduous task of packing.

The School Committee allowed us to close school a week earlier so that we could take advantage of the volunteer labor so generously offered by our students. Without their technical know-how, skill with tools, and vigorous muscular strength we would have been hopelessly handicapped. During the last few days of school the old building resembled a huge express office with thousands of boxes in dozens of rooms labeled accurately with the number of the box and its specific destination.

On the day in July when the moving operation began the head master, Mr. Holland, and three shop men under Mr. Spang were present every minute to watch carefully and see to it that the boxes went to the correct destinations. The chief headache, maximum security precautions, was seen to by a prearranged agreement with Mr. Roche, Mr. Holland, the department heads, and Mr. Musgrave, the head custodian at the Memorial Building.

When we opened in September we, of course, faced the tough obstacle of unpacking and systematizing our inventory of tools and supplies. Unfortunately, only the drafting and woodworking shops were ready to receive pupils. Not until early in December were the machine, hot and cold metal and electric shops ready to function.

Although the academic classes were ready to receive pupils, we were severely handicapped by having no gymnasiums, no lockers, and no lunchroom operating. At one time we were several days without lights or elevator service (five floors on one end), and, to add to our miseries, we had no switch-board operating. Our cup of suffering spilled over when our excellent electrically-operated mimeograph machine broke down. The repair man encouraged us by promising to be out in about a week. We managed luckily to get along with a miserably inefficient hand-operating machine that printed a smoochy, scarcely legible "daily directions" sheet for our eighty-odd teachers.

Despite these maddening handicaps our faculty rose to the occasion, dug in, gritted their teeth, and moved steadily forward. Things began to brighten up a bit when the bad locker shortage was corrected by our direct appeal to Dr. Gillis.

Finally, after a few months, everything began to brighten up. A new, modern, and beautifully lighted lunchroom opened up. The two excellent gyms began to operate.

Most of the machine shops began to function; our laboratory supplies came; the microscopes arrived. Except for cramped quarters in the chemistry labs (to be corrected by government grant this summer) our Science Departments were working full blast.

Right now the following problems need solution:

We need more teacher-parking space. (The police and fire departments have kindly ignored teachers parking on Townsend and Deckard Streets.)

We need better supervision and inspection by custodial personnel to prevent breaking, entering, and thieving.

PART II

Scholarship: This year's graduating class numbers 340, and of that number 169 are enrolled in the college preparatory course. At the time of this writing; there have been 128 acceptances for admission to colleges and technical institutions. The total should be considerably greater because we are completing applications daily.

The colleges and institutions to which our boys have been admitted include M.I.T., Harvard, Boston College, Holy Cross, Rensselaer, University of Pennsylvania, Northeastern, Union College, Tufts University, Princeton, University of North Dakota, Boston University, United States Merchant Marine Academy, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Ohio State University, Carnegie Institute of Technology, University of Massachusetts, Massachusetts State Colleges, Lowell Technological Institute, Howard University, Wentworth Institute, and Franklin Technical Institute.

To our knowledge, every boy who applied was admitted to at least one higher institute to which he sought acceptance.

In a state-wide competition for Engineering Graphic Advanced Placement held at Northeastern University, our boys won five of the first twelve prizes, including first prize. There were also six of our boys who won honorable mention.

In the National Merit Scholarship competition one Technical High boy was a semifinalist and four received certificates of merit.

Despite the hardships and inconveniences we had to suffer during the first half of the school year because of alterations going on in the building, the instruction, discipline, and student morale were exceedingly high.

Science Fairs: This year in the Boston School Science Fair three of our students won second-place honors, and in the State Science Fair held at M.I.T. one of our students won third prize.

I would like to mention at this time that a boy in the freshman class won the "Good Citizen Award" sponsored by the Boston Park Department; a sophomore won a prize in the Record-American Newsboy Contest; another, honorable mention in an essay contest conducted by the Boys' Club of South Boston; another a fourth prize in the Tilden Essay Contest conducted by the Boys' Club of Roxbury; and another sophomore won a \$100 scholarship in a nationwide contest, "Boy of the Year," conducted by the Reader's Digest Foundation.

These, in retrospect, are the most important happenings at Boston Technical High School over the past year. I would like to say again, in closing, that I honestly believe that we are offering our boys through our curriculum and services a well-rounded high school education that would be a credit to any public school system anywhere.

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